

*Series: Vajrayana teachings - 1*

# GURU DEVOTION

## How to integrate the primordial enlightened mind

*An extended commentary on the Lama Chöpa - Offering to the Spiritual Master*

Kyabje Gelek Rimpoche

*teachings 1994 – 2005*

Only to be read after having obtained a highest yoga tantra initiation



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This is the transcription of four teaching retreats on the *Lama Chöpa* that Rimpoche gave. The material is drawn from the winter retreats 1994, 1995 and 2000 in the US and from the spring retreat 2000 and autumn retreat 2005 in The Netherlands. The 1995 teachings have been taken as the basic teaching structure, into which the other teachings have been integrated. The English translation of the root text is the Jewel Heart translation.

Presenting the combined commentaries from four retreats on the topic this transcript contains different styles of teaching. It is a word commentary in which Rimpoche explains the richness of the original Tibetan text as well as a meaning commentary that explores the primordial mind in great depth and at the same time elaborates on the practice of guru yoga and the whole path to enlightenment according to the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. It contains guided meditations and visualization techniques as well as explanations on the ritual aspects of the *Lama Chöpa*.

Headings that correspond with the outlines are printed in bold type. Headings in Italics and not bold are just to make the text easier to read. For the sake of clarity and quick search for a topic sometimes words in the text are printed in bold. The notes serve as references for study in detail, as clarifications of foreign words and to provide added information. A chart showing the placement of the 32 deities according to the Guhyasamaja practice, the outlines, and additional texts for the *Lama Chöpa* practice are to be found in the Appendix. Glossary, list of literature and index are provided as usual.

Hartmut Sagolla transcribed the majority of the teachings, Dutch vajrayaners the teachings given in The Netherlands. Anne Warren checked the text of three retreats. The frontispiece is a copy of the thangka painted for Rimpoche by Marian van der Horst who also drew the cover illustration of Buddha Vajradhara and the majority of the number of mudras in this work.

Any mistakes are to be blamed on and any corrections will be welcomed by the editor, who enjoyed very much working on this most inspiring teaching.

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Marianne Soeters



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Panchen Lozang Chögyen

# I

## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Do kindly generate a very good motivation:

For the benefit of all mother sentient beings I want to obtain the ultimate Buddha Vajradhara state within a very, very short period. For this purpose, I would like to listen to this teaching of *guru-yoga*, the combined essence of sutra and tantra, and practice it.

This is the pure motivation normally prescribed in Lamrim teachings. So whatever understanding of bodhimind you have, generate that for the whole period of this retreat.

As for the motivation, it is a Dharma orientation. In this retreat, the beginning activity is the motivation. We are here in a retreat place, in the cold, in the middle of nowhere, somewhere in the middle of Michigan, in the snow, in miserable conditions. If you wanted to pick the most miserable place, this would be it! Really true. We could have done this in New York, or in California, or on the Bahamas. But we chose to be in the middle of nowhere, the most miserable place ever possible. All of that is not to torture ourselves, but to make some difference to our journey.

If you look at earlier times, people would go out in search of the teachings. The Tibetans did not get teachings easily. They had to select their best twenty-one kids and send them out of Tibet to India with a great deal of difficulties. Apart from six or seven, all died in India from the heat, coming from a cold country like Tibet. Also, in those days there were no roads. One early translator said, ‘There were a lot of difficult times on the journey, where the trees had fallen down on mountain passages. Even now, when I think about it, my heart shakes, together with my intestines.’ They really went through a lot of hardship. You can read Marpa’s biography in English and find out how much hardship he took to get teachings from Naropa. You can read how much hardship Naropa took to take teachings from Tilopa, how much hardship Milarepa took to get teachings from Marpa. That was in Tibet itself.

So whatever we do here, some hardships are well-deserved. The purpose why we are taken these hardships is to get some benefit through ourselves, for ourselves, for other people and also for future generations. This is our motivation. Even if you can’t think of all sentient beings, think of people you are connected with, the people around you, the family, the parents, the children. That is the motivation. That becomes your purpose, your mission, your job. That is why we are here.

Also it is really strange. This kind of teaching should not be happening here. But by sheer luck, it is happening. We are very fortunate to be part of it and so we should make best use of it. It is really a great opportunity. There is great benefit. I don’t have to tell you how good it is. You know yourself. So think of the family, children, grandchildren and so on. Then ‘all sentient beings’ will naturally come out of that. There is no such person called ‘all sentient beings’. Remember Stephen Batchelor’s joke: “Hey, you are not ‘all sentient beings’, so get out of my way.”

To remind you again, bodhimind is nothing other than the motivation and this is nothing but your purpose, your mission.

You are about to hear the teaching which all the past and present enlightened beings have practiced.

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<sup>1</sup> Literature on the first chapter: Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 11-31; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 1-43; Gehlek Rimpoche, *Ganden Lha Gyema*, Ch. 1

Traditionally, it is said:

It is the single path which all enlightened beings of the past, present, and future follow.  
 It is the essence of the practice of the early Indian mahasiddhas and mahapandits and of the Tibetan great masters who were specialized in learning, meditation, teaching, and composing.  
 It is the hand which collects both accumulations of merit, relative and absolute.  
 It is the fire which destroys all negativities, broken commitments, and downfalls.  
 It is the ultimate fire which destroys all bad karmas.  
 It is the hook which brings ultimate accomplishments, ordinary and extraordinary siddhihoods.  
 It is the practice that is absolutely necessary in sutra and tantra both.  
 It is the bliss-void combination.

This is the guru-yoga practice, particularly the way it was practiced by the mahasiddha Dharmavajra and his disciple, Gyelwa Ensapa, traditionally known as father and son mahasiddha Dharmavajra.<sup>2</sup>

### *Why you Absolutely Need a Guru-devotional Practice*

In the United States guru devotion has been, is at present, and will continue to be a very controversial practice. I would like to talk to you briefly about this. Is it possible for us to attain enlightenment without guru-devotional practice? To the extent of my knowledge, the answer is no, and I have very strong reasons and traditional support for saying this. When Atisha was in Tibet a number of his disciples asked him, “Since all of you in India have a lot of spiritual development, and none of us here in Tibet has any, what is the problem?” Atisha replied:

In India, we value our spiritual master tremendously, but you Tibetans think the spiritual master is worse than an ordinary human being, so how do you hope to gain any spiritual development?  
 There is no hope for you whatsoever.

There are countless reasons why you can’t develop without a spiritual master. In the tantras, this example is traditionally given:

When you are in a boat and there is no oarsman, how do you expect to go across?

It will be karma without Dharma.<sup>3</sup> Without an oarsman or a paddle, you can only hope that a suitable wind will blow to take you across, or you can use your hands to try. So you are limited. I believe spiritual masters serve that purpose of getting you across, not the spiritual masters alone, but with the lineage which is always behind them. That is why, without them, it is difficult.

Enlightenment doesn’t work like science. In a scientific experiment you can mix different chemicals together, experiment, and create a correct result every time. It works. That is true for external things, but I don’t think you can experiment in the same way on internal development, mind development. If you could, why not do it? Actually we have done so for quite a while already. Everybody wants happiness and a lot of spiritual paths tell us that happiness can be found within their particular approach, so why not experiment with those?

You can stuff up peoples’ mind or consciousness with different chemicals and see what happens, but it doesn’t work very well. It can bring you to some level, but not completely all the way. You need to work internally. Enlightenment depends on the work of the individual, practicing the path, which is the main thing, and accumulating merit, both absolute and relative. And, in addition to that, you need the enlightened beings’ support, the lineage-blessings, the unbroken continuation of the lineage from Buddha to your own level, which is the backbone support. The combination of those two, your own work and the blessings, can provide enlightenment. No matter how hard you work, even if you get all the different books and information and integrate them, put a lot of efforts in and work hard, you are not going to achieve anything by yourself. There is no new-age buddha yet, and there is not going to be one, because it doesn’t work that way. Working very hard will cut your delusions, your negativities, but it will not be able to deliver enlightenment, not at all. The traditional teachers use the example, “No matter how much you squeeze sand, you’re not going to get butter out of it.”

<sup>2</sup> For the story see Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 35-38.

<sup>3</sup> Rinpoche refers to the story of the Rabbi who lost his paddle on the lake, to be found in: *The Three Principles, a Concise Commentary*.



So guru-devotional practice is absolutely important. That is why, in Lamrim, it is called the root of all development, and, in Vajrayana, the source of all siddhis.

### *Why the Lama Chöpa is so Important*

This is an important practice, very easy, very comprehensive, it is almost that one cannot do without. Everything is included in it. It is almost like the eyes through which you can look at all phenomena. It is like the ocean that collects all the rivers which come from anywhere. We are very fortunate to have such a fortunate thing. It is Manjushri's teaching to Tsongkhapa. The essence of his practice was then put into words by the First Panchen Lama. It is simple, easy and fantastic. (It is important to say it when something is great. That does not mean that other traditions don't have great things. They have their own. But we are very fortunate to have this one.)

It is the real essence of the Buddha's teachings, given by Manjushri to Tsongkhapa. The *Lama Chöpa* totally focuses on guru-devotional practice, which is the root of all development. There are a lot of people who think that this is something the Vajrayana Buddhists have cooked up. Very often you hear the refuge taking as *Buddham saranam gacchami, Dharmam saranam gacchami, Sangham saranam gacchami*. They don't say *Guru saranam gacchami*. We say *Namo Gurubya Namō Buddhaya Namō Dharmaya Namō Sanghaya*. So many people think it is something the Vajrayana people have cooked up. It is brought up in the teachings and particularly the *Lama Chöpa* tells you that it is not something invented by the Tibetans or the Vajrayana people, but that it is actually taught by Buddha himself. Kachen Yeshe Gyaltsen's<sup>4</sup> commentary has almost twenty pages on this. He mentions that it comes from Buddha, and exactly which sutra has it.

Just to give you one example: In the traditional mythological Indian culture trades people would go over the ocean, looking for jewels in some jewel land somewhere in the middle of the ocean. When they go there they depend on a ship and a captain and so on. If you don't have all of that and just jump into the ocean you are just going to die. There are a lot of metaphors used in the traditional teachings. In order to go and collect the jewels you really have to depend on the ship, captain, *etc.* Likewise, in order to achieve our spiritual goals, we depend on the captain-like guru and the ship-like practice. That is the metaphor used in the sutras for pages and pages and volumes and volumes.

*Me ngag*. The actual method only Buddha knows. (That is according to the Buddhist tradition and that does not mean that the other traditions don't have anything). Maitreya Buddha said, "There is no one in this world who knows better than Buddha." Why is that so? Because he gained his experience by dealing with the neuroses that we have to deal with now. He did that and came through. He had similar sufferings as we do and he got out. His experience is our guide. And that comes in the form of the so-called *me ngags*. That does not just mean teachings but within the teachings they give you instructions with practical purposes. I have no idea which equivalent English word would express that. Maybe practical instructions.

The Buddhist *Kangyur* of which the *Prajnaparamita* is a part, is more complicated than the constitution of the United States. It is not easy to read. You can interpret it in many ways. It is purposely kept vague, so that people will develop their minds and ideas and it can be used at different times, according to the need. It can then be interpreted in a direction where it can be helpful. The sutras will never talk straightforwardly. Actually they do, but there is always another way it can be interpreted or another explanation that comes up somewhere else. That is why the *me ngags*<sup>5</sup> are extremely important. We cannot manage without them – particularly in Vajrayana. This is mentioned detailedly in the Kachen Yeshe Gyaltsen's commentary.

This is a problem with Kachen Yeshe Gyaltsen. He talks so much. (laughs). Page after page he gives really good explanations. But we have to take something solid from here – just a little thing. He tells you, for example, that practicing without *me ngags* is like shaking water and hoping to get butter through that. No matter how much you shake water, you will never get butter. Or if you want to go an unknown place, but you don't have a map and you can't ask anybody, you can go but you will not get anywhere. That is the reason why *Namo Gurubya* is important.

If there is no *me ngag*, even the great, learned scholars or saints, no matter how much they may practice, they won't achieve anything. On the contrary, sometimes they may get very upset because of

<sup>4</sup> 1713-1793; Tsechogling Yongzin Pandita Kachen Yeshe Gyaltsen; tutor of the 8<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama.

<sup>5</sup> *man ngag* - upadesha, secret oral instruction, key instructions

not achieving anything. Then, because of the consequences of the anger, there is more suffering than benefit. That is why it is always recommended to have a good guide.

The tantras further say that the path is like a boat and the teachings and *me ngags* are the oars. Then, even if you have the best qualities, without guru you are not going to be liberated from samsara. That is why it is very important. There are zillions of quotations from all parts of the sutras about this. For example, the *Prajnaparamita* talks about it. Ramjor, a disciple of Buddha, asked him, ‘How do the lay bodhisattvas – that means the new, not so developed bodhisattvas – learn about *prajna paramita*, the transcendental wisdom and how do they maintain it?’ Buddha replied,

The new bodhisattvas, in order to learn, need a guru-devotional practice. That means, to have a guru, maintain the relationship, pay respect, *etc.* That is how you work.

I have people coming to me who say, ‘I have had all these teachings, like *Odyssey to Freedom*, *Lama Chöpa*, *Lamrim*, *etc.* so where do I begin?’ Buddha’s reply is to begin here, at the guru devotional practice. He says that the first and foremost doorway is the guru-devotional practice. An example for the guru-devotional practice in the sutra is the bodhisattva called *Always Crying*.

How do the bodhisattvas gain their development, how do they dedicate, how do they pray, how do they obtain buddhahood? It depends on the Guru; he is the root of the development. You depend on him and all gets purified through him. That is from the sutra point of view. Then in Vajrayana it is beyond imagination; you *absolutely* depend on the Guru.

That should be enough about where to begin. Some people think it is about sitting down and wearing a different sort of dress, do their hair differently and do some woom woom business. But that is not the practice. A number of people do that. The Tibetans do. In the West you probably beat a gong and say OM or whatever. Crystals fly round and so on. The Tibetans will do prostrations, burn incense, go round, take refuge and so on. That is all great, but the most important practice is to work with your mind. There is plenty of information around how to take care of your body. Just turn on the television and there are so many physical exercises you can do. There is no lack of physical education. But we completely lack the mental education.

The relationship with the Guru is very important. During the Theravadin teachings the Guru should be seen as Buddha; in Mahayana you see the Guru as Buddha and in Vajrayana you see the Guru as inseparable from Buddha.

*Relationship.* All of you know, the root of all development is guru yoga. Even in the Lamrim the guru yoga is the foundation of all development. Even though in the Theravada tradition the guru-devotional practice is not so much emphasized as in Mahayana and Vajrayana, if you really look carefully, the abbot from whom one received the vows, is very much emphasized. In almost every function of your life whether sleeping or walking or whatever the abbot’s direction is emphasized. In the Theravada tradition the guru is seen from that angle rather than from a guru-devotional angle. In the Mahayana guru devotion is emphasized and in Vajrayana it is the fundamental basis.

What does that mean to the individual, to me? It really means: analyzing and thinking and passing resolutions on the outlines of the benefits of having a guru, the disadvantages of not having a guru and how to keep the relationship.

The relationship boils down to two points. Point one: the *mental relationship*. That means seeing your gurus as enlightened beings. I think that is a very important point. If you have a misunderstanding there, you try to clarify that misunderstanding. It should not be suppressed, not put aside or ignored. Look at it, deal with it, talk to people, think about it, ask questions and finally satisfy yourself. Problems are changeable, problems are dependent arisings; they are not independently existing. Certain problems are bound to be there because of us being human beings. The bottom line is: seeing the guru as a fully enlightened being.

Think about it, analyze and have a little understanding of yourself: what does that mean to me? Is that what the teachings are telling? And does that match or does it not match? If it does not match why does it not? If it matches be happy about it.

After analyzing, understanding and passing resolutions, one should be very happy about having a spiritual master and having a good relationship. And if there is anything that has gone wrong, through misunderstanding or through misinformation or just simply because one did not like something, it is not necessarily bad. It is bound to happen, particularly if you are talking about a relationship with a living human being. Some may be having it, some have had it and it’s gone, for some it might happen. That is

how it is. Even in good old Tibet it happened. And if you have a close contact there is more danger of difficulties, of misunderstanding, then when you have a less close contact. That is absolutely true. If you get teachings from His Holiness once in a few years and with ten thousands together, the relationship of closeness does not rise. In our case, in the Netherlands, when Helen was still alive and we were still a small group, I remember contacting with each and everyone of you. We used to have a beer together in the evening in Nijmegen. Remember? This sort of relationship may not be possible to develop with hundred people. So, the most important point is maintaining a good relationship.

Then, point two: *action relationship*. That is having great *respect*, by remembering the qualities of the lama, making offerings, making yourself available to serving the guru, giving praise and *making offerings* actually arranged and mentally created for the benefit of all sentient beings, keeping your moral commitments properly, and of course, most important, offering your perfect practice of sutra and tantra. The Lama Chöpa really has the complete stages of development, both sutra and tantra in the form of blessings. It is the most important offering, because it is the offering that *follows exactly the advices* of the lama. Thus it is the most important action one can take.

Seeing your own spiritual master as a collection of all the enlightened beings with all the qualities that have been mentioned in sutra and tantra, seeing all the qualities in the one individual person and developing *faith* – not blind faith but faith that follows on reasons, is common to Vajrayana and non-Vajrayana both.

At the sutra-level we establish the relationship. In Vajrayana, we establish it through the understanding of the nature of reality – emptiness. The recognizing mind, the mind of the person who is offering, is in the nature of joy. The recognition of the nature of the reality – void – and the mind in the nature of joy, becomes bliss-void inseparable. Such a bliss-void inseparable base, manifested in the form of outer, inner, secret and suchness offerings is offered to the guru. The combination of that makes it a Vajrayana thing. This is the key here.

So, the practitioner is in the form of a yidam. The object to whom you make the offering is the guru or lama, who is also not in ordinary form, but has the nature, the reality, and the appearance of a yidam – lama-yidam inseparable. All three, the offering person, every offering and the object of offering are of bliss-void nature.

Audience: We have Six-Session Guru yoga, we have Sadhana practice, we have the Guru puja, and all this is about Guru yoga. Why the distinction, because it is usually practised all three together?

Rinpoche: I believe it is one Guru and so it is Guru yoga, but each one of these three Guru yoga's have different emphasises. In the Lama Chöpa, as I summoned up earlier, the emphasis is more offering to the Guru, either in the form of offerings or in the form of practice. In other words it is trying to strengthen three things: the relationship in the mind, in action and in practice. That is the essence of Lama Chöpa. The Six-Session Guru yoga is almost like a shorter version of Lama Chöpa, but it emphasises something different: the fulfilment of the nineteen commitments to the five Buddha families that you took during the initiation. It has the guru in the form of Buddha Vajradharma and is the essence of the practice. The Ganden Lha Gyema is also a guru yoga, but this is on sutra basis. There are not so much tantra things involved. Then the sadhana practice. Every sadhana has a guru practice, more or less. That is because each and every sadhana has to function by itself as a complete practice. A sadhana basically is divided into: preliminary, actual and conclusion. In the preliminary level you have the Seven Limb, also called Seven Purities, and each of those seven is based upon the Supreme Field of Merit. That Supreme Field of Merit is Guru again. That is why you have a guru yoga part in the sadhanas. The Cittamani Guru yoga is not a sadhana; it is part of a sadhana.

*Origin according to the tantras.* In the case of this particular teaching you may ask where it comes from. Was it Manjushri talking to Tsongkhapa and Tsongkhapa teaching about it then or is it originally coming from Buddha? According to the tantras it comes from the Guhyasamaja tantra. They tell you there that the guru is actually the creator of the mandala and they tell you how the guru creates the mandala, how the mandala develops and how you make offerings to the mandala in order to accumulate merits. It tells you how to see the lama as inseparable from Gyelwa Dorjechang<sup>6</sup> and it is the yoga leading you through the two stages, the development- and the completion stage. This is totally mentioned in the Guhyasamaja tantra.

<sup>6</sup> Gyelwa: Conqueror; Dorje Chang: Vajradhara.

Although it is mentioned, it was done so in a hidden way, under six knots and four systems. If you look at it, you won't see it, if you read about it you won't understand it. You have to untie these six knots in four different ways. You may think that you can just pick it up from the sutras and tantras, getting it from the horse's mouth. But that doesn't work. That is why the *me ngags*, the practical instructions, are so important. In the *me ngags* there are a few hidden things, but not so much. You can get it quite easily. In the Guhyasamaja root tantra Buddha talks about the six knots and the four ways, but nobody could do it. So he himself had to give a commentary on it. He himself had to loosen up the secrecy a little bit. From the Vajrayana point of view, the *Lama Chöpa* is completely rooted in the Guhyasamaja tantra.

You have to think that the lama is the real essence of all buddhas. In the *Vajramala* [Tib. *dorje trengwa*], the commentary [to the Guhyasamaja tantra], the system [of developing that] is:

- *Observing*. The lama observes the disciple and the disciple observes the lama. First you have to know the criteria for a guru. Then also you have to know the criteria for the disciple. The guru may be good but if the disciple is useless, it does not do anyone any good. Likewise, if the disciple is good and the guru is not, then again it is totally useless.
- *Relationship guru and disciple*. Once you find a qualified guru, you have to check how to maintain the relationship with that guru.
- *Seeing the lama as inseparable from the yidam*. Then you have to see how the guru is inseparable from the yidam. That is the essence of the relationship.
- *Meditating on the Lama-mandala and making offerings*. You meditate the body of the guru in the mandala and you make offerings to the guru and the mandala, in particular outer-, inner-, secret- and suchness offerings.
- *Seeing the lama and the individual self as inseparable*.
- *Meditating the stages of development*. How to develop the two stages, the development stage and the completion stage.

All these teachings were clearly mentioned by Buddha himself. Yet he gave that teaching to Vajrapani. That is why Vajrapani is so important. They talk about the three castes of Buddha, Avalokiteshvara, Manjushri and Vajrapani. Manjushri is wisdom, Avalokiteshvara is compassion, and Vajrapani is power. Because he is so powerful, he has been given the tantras to protect them. That is why Vajrapani is called 'Holder of the yantras and tantras.' And that is why he carries that vajra. He is saying, 'Anybody who is trying to take that away, I am going to hit.'

Do you want to hear a joke? Avalokiteshvara picked up a pebble and threw it at Tara. She got hit by that. At that time Manjushri raised his sword and said to Vajrapani, 'Aren't you going to stop that?' Then Vajrapani said to Manjushri, 'Go ahead and hit him!'

This teaching was actually given to Avalokiteshvara, Manjushri and Vajrapani. All of these teachings are then coming through Nagarjuna and his disciples, Asanga and his disciples, the King Indra Bodhi and the great Indian Mahasiddhas Mahasukha<sup>7</sup> [Tib. *Dewa Chenpo*], Saraha<sup>8</sup>, Luipa<sup>9</sup>, Sharawa, Lalitavajra, Tilopa<sup>10</sup> and Naropa<sup>11</sup>.

The reason why both, Manjushri and Maitreya, are mentioned is this. Normally the wisdom lineage goes through Manjushri, Nagarjuna and so forth. (You can see that in the Lamrim lineage tree.) And Maitreya Buddha, Asanga and so forth carry the vast teaching lineage. In the *Lama Chöpa* you see both lineages combined. Saraha and Sharawa are from the Guhyasamaja part, Luipa is the Heruka part and Lalitavajra is the Yamantaka part. Then you have Tilopa and Naropa and this is their essence practice.

Each one of them has given certain teachings but it was not comprehensive. They just wrote pieces and parts of it. Then the great Mahasiddha Mahasukha wrote a commentary on the Guhyasamaja called

<sup>7</sup> Also known as Padmavajra. Ninth or tenth century. Ref. K. Dowman, *Masters of Mahamudra*, p. 345-46.

<sup>8</sup> Eighth or ninth century. Ref. and Literature: Keith Dowman, *Masters of Mahamudra*, p. 66-72.

<sup>9</sup> Eighth century. Ref. and Literature: Keith Dowman, *Masters of Mahamudra*, p. 33-38; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Guide to Dakiniland*, p. 10; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Essence of Vajrayana* p. 13-16; Hans Wolfgang Schumann, *Buddhistische Bilderwelt*, p. 301.

<sup>10</sup> 988-1069. Literature: *Life of the Mahasiddha Tilopa* [11th c. text]; Keith Dowman, *Masters of Mahamudra*, p. 151-155; Khenpo Könchog Gyaltsen, *The great Kagyu masters*, p. 33-54.

<sup>11</sup> 1016-1100. Literature: Gehlek Rimpoche, *Vajrayogini Teachings*; H. Guenther, *Life and teachings of Naropa*; Chögyam Trungpa, *Illusion's Game*; *The Life and Teachings of Naropa*; Keith Dowman, *Masters of Mahamudra*, p. 142-147. Khenpo Könchog Gyaltsen, *The great Kagyu masters*, p. 55-89.

*tön se* or also *sangwa drupa*<sup>12</sup>. Within that particular commentary he made very clear how an individual practitioner can do the guru yoga as the backbone of all yoga practices. The guru yoga *is* the backbone of all our practice. You may have this and that sadhana, but your backbone is the guru yoga. If you can do all your practices within that guru yoga, it is great. All the practices, including the Bengali *doha*<sup>13</sup> practices have been included in this practice by Mahasukha.

Audience: In the tsoh offering, at one point we say *A ho mahasukha*. Does this Mahasiddha Mahasukha have anything to do with this?

Rinpoche: Mahasukha just means Great Joy. I don't think there is a particular relationship with this person, although it all comes through that. It really just means 'how wonderful' or something.

Eventually, all the practical instructions were finally carried by Atisha. He made it absolutely clear to all the Mahayana practitioners that the success of all the practices depend on the guru-devotional practices and not only that, they depend on the guru himself and the relationship with him. If you look at Atisha's life story and that of the other Kadampa lamas, many of them have gained their development through their relationship with the guru rather than through sitting and meditating. Remember the story of the great meditator and the cook and his translator. When they compared their development, the meditator could not even reach the cook, let alone Dromtönpa, his translator. The meditator, who had taken teachings and had been meditating for years, even could not get anywhere near the cook who had not had any time at all to meditate on anything for a single minute. That was Atisha's way of showing this within his own group. He did not just teach about it.

His chief disciple Drom Rinpoche asked Atisha once, 'In India there were so many great masters with great development. In Tibet we are also putting so much effort in, but nobody is getting anything. So what is the matter?' We probably think the same way nowadays. There are so many western teachers of Buddhism around and they wonder why nobody is getting any recognition! Anyway, Atisha replied,

Mahayana qualities, big, small or whatever, totally depend on the guru. They grow because of the guru. You Tibetans think that the guru is just a simple, ordinary *bum* [guy] like yourselves, so how can you gain development?

Atisha himself had guru yoga as his main practice. That is why he had a great number of disciples and they were all great. Atisha's teachings are continuing even today, not only in Tibet, in China and Mongolia, but even in this part of the world now. Atisha lived in the eleven hundreds, became popular and famous and his teachings have been so helpful in many parts of the world for a thousand years. All of us are trying to follow Atisha's teachings. That is all because of the guru-devotional practices.

Likewise Tsongkhapa. Wherever he moved, thousands of people moved with him. Sometimes, when he was already giving teachings somewhere else, there were still people arriving at the place where he had just finished. That sort of thing happened all the time. One of the Sakyapa teachers thought that Tsongkhapa must know some secret yantra and tantra technique in order to collect such large numbers of people. So he asked him directly about it. Tsongkhapa said, 'I have no idea. But whatever little help I have been able to contribute is totally due to my guru-devotional practice, nothing else.' So we can see how important it is.

Even today, in our own lifetime it is like that. Remember our good friend Allen Ginsberg. Think about how he died. There were all these hours where we did not move his body when he died. I did not say it at the time but literally what happened was that he was sitting in the meditation, nothing more and nothing less. And that only happened through his devotion to his teachers.

Then look at Ram Dass, how helpful he is to so many people. That has been possible through his total devotion to Nim Karoli Baba.

I have given you examples from the Buddha's time, from the time of Tsongkhapa and even from our own lifetime from people that you know. So there must be some reason why the earlier masters have emphasized the guru yoga so much. I am not here to demand your respect and devotion. Honestly speaking, personally I don't care. You know me, I have no hidden agenda, I don't care. Whatever you do, I

<sup>12</sup> Skt. *Guhyasiddhi*. E. *Establishing the hidden factors*. Ref. Dalai Lama, *The Gelug/Kagyü Tradition of Mahamudra*.

<sup>13</sup> enlightenment songs.

fight with you, I challenge you, I give you a hard time. It depends on the individual. I can fight with you, but I cannot fight with my own gurus.

Atisha himself considered Serlingpa, his teacher of the bodhisattva teachings, as his guru. Whenever he mentioned his name, he did not just say Serlingpa, but always put his hands together at his forehead. Without that he would not even utter the name of his guru. Tsongkhapa did the same with Lama Umapa, Manjushri, Rendawa and all of his great teachers. You can see that in all of his writings and in the stories. Even in my lifetime, Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche and Kyabje Ling Rinpoche, whenever they talked about their teacher, the famous Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo, they would never call him Pabongka but always refer to Lama Dorje Chang, which means Lama Vajradhara.

The guru-devotional practice is very important in the beginning, in the middle and at the end. It functions that way. It is the root, it is the nutrition that you receive for your spiritual development and it is the fruit as well. That is why the *Lama Chöpa* is so important.

This practice includes the development of bodhimind, both absolute and relative, and at the end it picks up the essence of Vajrayana practice, development stage and completion stage, along with combined sutra and tantra *Mahamudra*. That is its real essence. It is really very fortunate that we can do such a practice.

Whether in combination with, or without the *Mahamudra*, the *Lama Chöpa* is an extremely important practice. It can be done in a very simple and easy way, by just reading and understanding the words, and it can be done in a very profound way. When you do it the profound way, almost the whole essence of both sutra and tantra is brought in. It is such an interesting practice: if you're not that intelligent or diligent you can do it in the simple, easy way of just reading, and when you go a little bit deeper in it, its depth is tremendous! You can go one step down, or ten feet down or three thousand feet down. If you do it superficially, it will give you good benefit and, if you do it in depth, it will give you tremendous benefit!

Also, the teaching itself conveys its message on different layers. Each word carries a different message on every level. That is what I meant, saying it is deep and it can be done either the easy way or really going very deep into the spiritual path. This is why it is said,

It is the only path earlier enlightened beings followed  
and it is only this path that they will travel in future.

We'll go the simple way, because I don't have the knowledge available.

*Living tradition.* I received this teaching from Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche forty years ago, somewhere across the river from *Tsechor ling* valley in Lhasa. It was in the fourth lunar month of the Tibetan calendar, late spring or early summer, probably 1954, maybe 1956. We had a month-long teaching, starting at noon and continuing until 5 or 6 in the afternoon. Also the 24 hour bodhisattva vow was taken at the full moon. And we had a one day break in order to look for emptiness. Then we went round in the mountains *etc.* Why so I tell this? This is the continuation of a living tradition. A number of people who are known in the West now were there, too: Lama Yeshe, Dagab Rinpoche, Tomo Geshe Rinpoche, and Geshe Kelsang Gyatso. We received the teachings at the same time. Song Rinpoche was not there, because he was already a senior lama in those days.

I tried to remember the prayers we said and the order in which it was done, but I couldn't remember. Some lamas in the tradition do and others don't really pay much attention to it. I do, because Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche and Kyabje Ling Rinpoche used to emphasize how every teaching was to be done, and what prayers were to be said where. Tradition was very carefully followed. It is said that this helps to maintain the unbroken lineage and supports development within practitioners. Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche and Kyabje Ling Rinpoche paid a tremendous amount of attention to it. They would say, "Oh no, this is not done that way, although it would definitely fit, it is not said that way." His Holiness doesn't put too much emphasis on how it is traditionally done, he'll do it as is convenient. Because he is the Dalai Lama, he can't really follow it, because the security people control his schedule, and that is perfectly okay.

I wanted to follow how it was done traditionally, so I called Dagab Rinpoche, Tomo Geshe Rinpoche, and Geshe Kelsang Gyatso to ask them, "Do you remember..." They didn't. Then I wrote to Trijang Rinpoche's attendant and I asked him whether he could remember how it was done. He wrote back: "At that time I was a servant and therefore had no opportunity to sit down. I was in the category that had

to say prayers sitting at the back, so I don't know anything about what was said then. But Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche gave the teaching twice after coming to India, once to Kyabje Ling Rinpoche and once to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and, at that time, this lineage prayer was said." He sent me a copy of this prayer and a commentary that Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche used during those teachings.

I think as far as the lineage prayer is concerned, we have done perfectly without making any mistake. But as far as the teaching is concerned I don't remember much, because forty years makes it very hard to remember. I thought I would read some books and prepare, but unfortunately I've only reached to the ninth non-leisure.<sup>14</sup> Anyway, we will go through together and I'll try to give you, without going into detail, a short essence, something you can think about as you say the words.

You have to remember that the main purpose is to meditate on what you know so far. To sit and close your eyes, think nothing, and give yourself mental relaxation is very good and important, no doubt, but in the Tibetan tradition, especially in this Vajrayana tradition, meditation goes with saying the words. This practice is slightly sophisticated, there is order in it, and there are a lot of things you have to think about. To make sure you don't miss anything, the earlier masters composed these few words so that you can do the meditation and say the words together. This way, it is a combination of body, speech and mind; all three work together. I should say here that this is a better meditation than only sitting, though there are times that you have to sit; they come, too.

When you say the words, something more than the words only has to come up in your mind. Words are symbolic; they carry a message behind them, each word a different message. All these messages symbolized by words are here composed together. By picking up the words, you can pick up the different messages. What I'll try to give you here is the essence of those messages, so that when you say the words, you can recall the message. If you keep on recollecting the messages, you are training your mind, tuning in to those messages, and that is really what is called practice. In that way you tune in to this path and that will bring you further along.

#### *Title of the Text in Tibetan: Lama Chöpa Choga*

*Lama* and *Guru* are synonymous; one is Sanskrit, the other Tibetan. What does *Guru* really mean? You may call it master, friend, Dharma-friend, Dharma-guide, or mentor. You can say these sorts of things in English, but the word *Guru* or *Lama* is supposed to mean 'heavy in quality'.

*Chöpa* or *puja* means offering, offering as a practice, as a spiritual exercise. If we say 'offering', we may think of giving, but here there are a number of different offerings: outer offering, inner offering, secret offering, suchness offering, practice offering. Particularly important is the practice offering, which is not necessarily giving something. Also look at the six paramitas: the paramita of generosity is not necessarily giving. There are three types of generosity<sup>15</sup>, and generosity is also applicable to all other paramitas: there is generosity of morality, generosity of patience, generosity of enthusiasm, generosity of concentration, generosity of wisdom. So, regarding *chöpa*, you should think of a lot of different ways of offering, which will come a little later.

*Choga* means ritual. You say words, get the message behind the words, and think about the message. Actually, *choga* means *yoga*, too. The word *choga* is only applied to practices that deal with Vajrayana, not to pure Sutrayana, with the exception of the Medicine Buddha practice. Mostly, the word *choga* or *yoga* indicates that it deals with Vajrayana.

Let me briefly talk about the author of this *Lama Chöpa* text. The Panchen Lama Lozang Chögyen<sup>16</sup>, who lived three or four generations later than Tsongkhapa and is officially called the First Panchen Lama, composed it.

There are two systems of counting the Panchen Lamas. The first system counts Kedrub Je, Je Tsongkhapa's disciple, as the first Panchen Lama, in which case the second Panchen Lama is Sonam Chögye Langpo, and the third is Panchen Lozang Chögyen. Then today's should be the eleventh or the twelfth. The second system counts Panchen Lozang Chögyen as the first Panchen Lama, because since his time there has been an established *labrang*.<sup>17</sup> In that case the current one should be the sixth or the

<sup>14</sup> For the ninth non-leisure see Gehlek Rinpoche *Lam Rim Teachings*.

<sup>15</sup> Generosity of giving material things, generosity of protecting against fear and generosity of sharing the Dharma.

<sup>16</sup> Panchen Lozang Chökyi Gyeltsen, 1569-1662.

<sup>17</sup> The institution of a recognized reincarnation [Tib. *tulku*].

seventh. Traditionally Panchen Lozang Chögyen is considered to be the first. These days you are reading that the current Panchen Lama is the eleventh or twelfth. Panchen means “great learned scholar”. It is actually the translation of the Indian word pandit, mahapandit.

Though Panchen Lozang Chögyen composed this text, it was not as if he cooked up a story or wrote a novel. The practice ultimately derives from Buddha Vajradhara and Buddha Shakyamuni. You will see that later.<sup>18</sup>

I suggest that you read the *Lama Chöpa* text.<sup>19</sup> Since I am explaining the words now, it will be very easy. I don’t want to try to give the whole message, but only to touch on it symbolically. It is all hidden messages, a hidden treasury, which can be opened by words.

### *Commentaries and Outlines*

I have brought four different commentaries on the Lama Chöpa. The first is a detailed commentary by Yongzin [Kachen] Yeshe Gyaltsen<sup>20</sup>. Actually he also wrote a very short commentary. Secondly, we have the *Kachem lung kur*, meaning something like ‘The last words are carried by air’. This is considered very sacred, written by a Drepung Loseling Geshe called Tsültrim Nyima<sup>21</sup>. The third is a short word commentary by Khedrup Je.<sup>22</sup> Lastly I have the Lama-Chöpa commentary by Ngulchu Dharmabhadra<sup>23</sup>. I may not be able to read all of them together, but whenever I am talking I intend to open them up. I am trying to open up the relevant pages, so that this teaching will be a little comprehensive.

I will give the teaching on the basis of the text and I’ll also try to give you the outlines. However, the outlines I am going to give you may not correspond with the outlines of Geshe Kelsang Gyatso’s *Great Treasury of Merit* or the Dalai Lama’s *Union of Bliss and Emptiness*. You should follow what you get now. I am trying to make it as simple as possible, but at the same time, outlines keep everything within the framework, and build up a structure. Once you have the structure, the complete teaching is very easy to comprehend. So the whole text will be summarized in the outlines, and these will go into shorter ones, and that will remain with you.<sup>24</sup>

In order to talk about this teaching, there are three basic outlines headings:

1. Source: the lineage is explained in order to show the authenticity of this practice.
  2. Quality: the qualities of the teaching are explained in order to foster intelligent faith, to motivate the practitioners.
  3. Actual: the practice is explained in order to transmit proper understanding of the practice.
- So basically: tradition, quality of the teaching, and how to practice. If you remember these, it will be easy to keep hold of the whole text and comprehend it.

## **1. Source and Lineage of the Teaching**

### **Source of the Teaching<sup>25</sup>**

The actual Tibetan text starts with *gya kar ke du*, meaning “in Indian language”. It says, “In Indian language *Guru Puja Saya Kala Nama*.” Normally, in the Tibetan tradition, only books translated from Sanskrit give the title in both Sanskrit and Tibetan, but, in this case, and also in the *Six-Session Guru Yoga*, the author chose to give the title in Indian language as well, even though these texts were not translated

<sup>18</sup> See page 15.

<sup>19</sup> Besides the Jewel Heart translation, used in this transcript, several translations of the *Lama Chöpa* text are available: in Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*; in Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*; in Robert Thurman, *Essential Tibetan Buddhism*; in *The Guru Puja* LTWA, tr. Alexander Berzin.

<sup>20</sup> 1713-1793. Tutor to the Eight Dalai Lama.

<sup>21</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> century

<sup>22</sup> 1385-1438

<sup>23</sup> 1772-1851.

<sup>24</sup> Rinpoche made an organizational remark about children in the retreat: ‘People are welcome to have their children here, but do not bring them to the front, please sit at the back; as children are children, they’ll play around. Let them play, but we don’t play with them, in other words we don’t focus on them. I think that is what we should do, because it is very good for them to hear this. Let them play, doesn’t matter, it is okay as long as we don’t pay attention.

<sup>25</sup> Also see page 237



from an Indian source. The reason is to show that the text comes from the Indian teaching tradition and is not ‘cooked up’ by a Tibetan teacher.

The essence of the message is Buddha’s own experience, followed by many Indian masters, and in Tibet by Je Tsongkhapa and his disciples. Not only they learned and studied and meditated and achieved the highest achievement; many obtained that state, including my late masters. Also, until my late masters the heat of the blessing has been continuing, has not disappeared. In other words, it is really a hot teaching! (I’m giving you the oral transmission of the *Kachem Lung* and the teaching together, so I’ll read a little more.<sup>26</sup>)

The Guru puja is the essence of the guru-devotional practice, which is nothing more [and nothing less], than what you get in Lamrim: the reasons you need a guru, the eight advantages of having and the eight disadvantages of not having a good relationship *etc.* I a guru-devotional practice for Vajrayana only? The Vajrayana refuge has, ‘Namo Gurubhye’ while non-Vajrayana refuge skips that part. So is it for Vajrayana only? This commentary says:

From the beginning, from the moment you take refuge, from the moment you take a lay<sup>27</sup> or a monk’s vow, you need a master. A vow very much depends on the qualities of the master that gives the vow and the qualities of the disciple that receives the vow. After taking the vows, you take a teacher for guidance. The guidance teacher will help you to study, to analyze, and to meditate. And you are shown the relationship between the master from who you received the vow and the guidance master.

Here in Jewel Heart it works that way, too. I come in once or twice a year and the rest of the year you have your dharma teachers. That is exactly like it is described here. The set up here was done on this basis, though we haven’t told you at that time. We tell you now; it is authentic.

One of the commentaries uses fifty percent of its text to prove how authentic and how important *guru-yoga* practice is, what the Indian tradition is, in which *Kangyur*<sup>28</sup> and in which *Tangyur*<sup>29</sup> it was said. That is the reason why I only reached the ninth non-leisure in preparing.

The Theravadin source is a sutra from the *Tripitaka*<sup>30</sup> called *Seventeen Bases*. One Mahayana source is the *Avatamsaka Sutra* [Tib. *mdo phal po che*], available in Chinese, English, Sanskrit, and Tibetan, not in Pali. The second Mahayana source is the *Prajnaparamita* in eight thousand verses.<sup>31</sup> This teaching is also based on the tantras. So, it is based on the Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana teachings of the Buddha himself in India. That’s why it says at the beginning, “in Indian language”.

Not only that. In both Theravada and Mahayana teachings, it says that in order to obtain enlightenment one has to depend on the guru. Also, you find guru-yoga practice in all the *ngön dro*, the preliminary practices, everywhere. If you keep guru-yoga as the backbone of your practice, you travel much easier and faster.

And furthermore, in order to achieve completion of one’s practice, it is always said that keeping one’s commitments is the key. The first and most important commitment in Vajrayana is the vajra-master commitment. That’s why guru yoga is extremely important, in the beginning, during the practice, and at the end. It is the essence of all tantras, of all Mahayana sutras, and even of the Theravada teachings.

Panchen Lozang Chökyi Gyeltsen states that the ultimate source for this teaching is the root **tantra of Guhyasamaja** and the explanatory tantra of Guhyasamaja called the *Vajramala Tantra*.<sup>32</sup>

So this tradition comes from Buddha’s practice itself. From the Buddha<sup>33</sup> it came through the earlier Indian masters, particularly Naropa, Tilopa, Dombhipa<sup>34</sup> and all those mahasiddhas. Their essence-practice was guru-devotion as you can definitely see in their biographies. When the teaching tradition was brought into Tibet, it became the essential practice of Marpa and Milarepa. And it has been the essence of practice in all the Tibetan schools like the *Chetra mawa* [Skt. Vaibhasika], *Dodepa* [Skt. Sautantrika], *Sem tsenpa*

<sup>26</sup> Teaching Nijmegen, The Netherlands, autumn 2005. Rimpoche continues the *lung*.

<sup>27</sup> Upasaka.

<sup>28</sup> The collection of Words of the Buddha.

<sup>29</sup> The collection of commentaries on the Words of the Buddha.

<sup>30</sup> The three collections of teachings of the Buddha: *vinaya*, the collection of teachings on rules of discipline, *sutra*, the collection of teachings on wisdom and method, and *abhidharma*, the collection of teachings on metaphysics. The Tibetan tradition has a different classification: *Kangyur* and *Tangyur*. See notes 28 and 29 on p. 14.

<sup>31</sup> See Literature for the English translations of the *Avatamsaka Sutra* and the *Prajnaparamita sutra*.

<sup>32</sup> Skt. *Sri Vajramala Abhidhana Mahayoga Tantra*. Tib. *Che gyu dorje trengwa*.

<sup>33</sup> In the case of Vajrayana it is Buddha in the form of Buddha Vajradhara.

<sup>34</sup> References: Keith Dowman, *Masters of Mahamudra*, p.53-59.

[Skt. Chittamatrins] and *Umāpa* [Skt. Madhyamika], the four schools of tenets, rather than the Kagyu, Sakya, Nyingma and Gelug.

Within the Ganden-Kagyu<sup>35</sup> tradition, it not only came from Tsongkhapa's masters of the Sakya and Kagyu tradition; the main point is that it came from **Manjushri**, as a result of Tsongkhapa's request to Manjushri. The total essence of this teaching, *Lama Chöpa*, in the Gelugpa tradition carries a tremendous message that Manjushri added up and gave to Tsongkhapa. That was carried almost as a backbone.

From the great Tsongkhapa and his disciples, it came down to my late masters. Therefore, it carries a tremendous amount of blessing. It is said, "The heat of the blessing is not lost." It is such an authentic continuation that the steam of the blessing has not disappeared down to my late masters. It is the source for accomplishing your own purpose and the purpose of others, the source of benefiting yourself and others.

One of the reasons why we say it is authentic, is that it is coming from Buddha. The point here really is, it is coming from one who had really accomplished the two purposes: the purpose of the individual and the purpose of others. That means, the individual him or herself really got through, really got fully enlightened, so accomplished his or her own purpose. The purpose of others: when somebody made it through, that somebody will be able to share his own personal experience, and when that is confirmed and followed by a number of others, they also will make it. I think it is a very important point, rather than "I feel this way" or "this is my intuition" or "this is my imagination" or "I presume this is that way". All these are very unreliable, not very scientific. This is beyond that level. Not only one person but a number of persons followed this and no matter whoever that person might be, Indian, Tibetan, European, whoever it may be, if you do it in exactly the way it was taught you get the same result as expected. This is a very scientific basis, though they did not call it scientific at that time. That is the reason why they wrote the title in Sanskrit, rather than try to show that it is a translation from the Indian language.

The practice has different stages, all of which are absolutely necessary. Also, the order in which this practice is done is critically important. The earlier teachers say, "it is such a short practice, so few words and yet so many messages." I'm not sure whether for us today it is such a short practice or not, but that is what the traditional teachings tell you. There is a big difference between the Tibetan text and the English translation. In Tibetan, you can finish in fifteen minutes, in English no way, it is more a commentary than an actual *Lama Chöpa* translation, more a commentary than an essence-signal.

### Lineage of the Teaching

The Lama Chöpa tree shows you where this teaching tradition came from.<sup>36</sup> In India, the tradition came down unbroken from **Buddha** to Atisha, through two basic lineages. The vast lineage came from Buddha through Buddha Maitreya, Asanga, and so on, and the profound lineage came from Buddha through Manjushri, Nagarjuna, and Shantideva.<sup>37</sup> That is the same as in the Lamrim. And, in addition, the actual practice lineage came from Buddha to Atisha directly. So, we have the profound lineage through **Manjushri**, the vast lineage through **Maitreya**, and the practice lineage. Basically, three different lineages up to **Atisha**. Through Atisha, the teachings came to Tibet and then went into the various different paths of the Tibetan schools. Tsongkhapa received all these teachings from his different masters of the Sakya, Kagyu, and Nyingma traditions. And all of the teachings reached Tsongkhapa in unbroken lineages.

You can see these lineages on the thangka behind me, that shows the *Lama Chöpa* merit-field. This thangka was painted for me by Marian van der Horst (see frontispiece). At first when I suggested it, she thought I was joking, then she took it seriously and devoted three years to this work. That is why we have this thangka here, just finished! It is very beautiful. Thank you so much! It is a very good omen that it is ready at this time and that she herself brought it with her to this retreat<sup>38</sup>.

Atisha always said,

<sup>35</sup> Other name for Gelugpa tradition; also, New Kadam is another name for Gelugpa.

<sup>36</sup> Also see page 10.

<sup>37</sup> Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 24: 'Both aspects stem from 'the *Prajnaparamita* sutras (which are the chief among the sutras).'

<sup>38</sup> 1994.

The good qualities that I have, may be a little kindness in my heart, all that is due to the kindness of Lama Serlingpa.

Atisha wrote the text *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*. It is the essence of his practice and his teachings. In that he said, 'Whatever is written here, comes from the masters.' So he always attributed all the qualities he had to the kindness of his masters. His essence practice was guru yoga as backbone of his practice.

*Tsongkhapa*. The lineage goes from Vajradhara to Atisha and from him to **Tsongkhapa** and includes all the Mahasiddhas like Naropa, Tilopa and even the Pamtingpas. All their lineages have been obtained by Tsongkhapa. Among them are the Kagyupa tradition of Chengapa and all these Kagyupa lamas. Through Rendawa<sup>39</sup> he had the teachings of the Sakya tradition. Thus Tsongkhapa not only had the direct teachings from Manjushri but also the distant teachings through those lamas. The shortest lineage is from Manjushri to Tsongkhapa himself. When you look at the thangka, you see what we normally call the 'five groups of lamas'.<sup>40</sup> All those lineages came to Tsongkhapa and he himself had contact with Manjushri that was direct, more than just visions.

*Manjushri – Jampelyang*. In Tibetan, the name Manjushri is *Jampelyang*. There are a tremendous number of explanations for that name. I better not go into them now, otherwise the teaching will go off on a tangent, but basically, all the teachings of Mahamudra, in Tibetan, *chak gya chen po*,<sup>41</sup> and also *dzok chen*, are included in the name *Jampelyang*, just in the name alone.

Very briefly, the meaning of the name *Jam pel yang* is as follows. *Jam* means soft. So Manjushri must be very sort and smooth. *Pel* is glorious. *Yang* means beautiful sound. He is soft and smooth, because he is free of delusions and imprints of delusions. There is no rough edge left. He is very soft and gentle. He is glorious, because he has all the thirty-two major and eighty minor marks of buddhahood. He is glorious, dignified and majestic, wonderful. *Yang* means that his teachings include the complete twelve branches of Buddha's teachings. Each syllable carries a complete important meaning in the spiritual path. In essence, Manjushri is the wisdom of all enlightened beings, in physical form appearing as the youthful Bodhisattva Manjushri.

We do have this word explanation of the name *Jam pel yang*, but that does not mean you can do the same with other deities. For example, some western teachers of Buddhism are trying to explain the name of *Chen re zig* in a similar way, but that has never been heard about before. It is a special quality for Manjushri. I don't think each syllable of each deity has meaning.

*Tsongkhapa's special teachings from Manjushri*. In the beginning of the teachings from Manjushri to Tsongkhapa Lama Umapa, a Sakya lama, acted as an interpreter between them. After a little while he became like a postman delivering messages. After some time, Tsongkhapa had direct visions of Manjushri and received all these teachings from him, above all the wisdom teachings. In particular, he obtained the unique presentation of the wisdom part. This says that appearance negates existentialism or eternalism and emptiness negates nihilism. This looks like the opposite of what you would expect. Normally, when you see something, it confirms that it exists. You saw it. And if you don't see it, you will think that it might not be there. But Tsongkhapa has this particular way of explaining it. This is the most important point regarding wisdom. In the *Three Principles of the Path* it says,

Further, appearance eliminates the extreme of existence.  
Emptiness eliminates non-existence.  
Emptiness itself is cause and effect.  
Understanding this protects from these extremes.

This is where the view differs between Tsongkhapa and all other traditions like Kagyu, Sakya and Nyingma. All the other traditions will say that by seeing it, you eliminate the extreme of 'is not'. By not seeing it, it eliminates what 'is'. Tsongkhapa goes the other way round. This is the different Gelugpa viewpoint. That is why Tsongkhapa talks about *Essence of Refined Gold*. Otherwise, compassion and

<sup>39</sup> Rendawa Zhonnu Lodro 1349-1412.

<sup>40</sup> See frontispiece. For the detailed explanation see page 113.

<sup>41</sup> *phyag rgya chen po*, *chak chen* for short.

love is all the same thing in the different traditions. There are also many differences in terms of practical instructions. But regarding theoretical points, this is one of the major important ones.

That is why Tsongkhapa says that if you just look into zero, you will only get zero. But if you look into how things exist, you will find how or in what way they are not there. Otherwise zero is zero, that is about it. Actually, the number one important point is to establish what zero is. Where it is empty, that is where you put the zero. Then how zero establishes zero, that is even more important. The method of not looking into zero is one of the main reasons why practitioners in Tsongkhapa's tradition are not looking into the air with big eyes and open mouth. The point is that since an object has appeared it is there. The question is 'How is it there?' Is it there independent of anything else, or is it there by itself, independently? Actually the way you perceive it is dependently. This tells you that you are not there independently. The object that you perceive is also not there independently. So in that sense existence refutes eternalism.

Now to the other side: When we talk about emptiness we are not talking about nothingness. Something is there. It is emptiness, meaning it is empty of something. And what is this something? That is the point here. So something is not nothing and that shows you how emptiness negates nihilism. I brought the zero in here, because the zero is the most important sign. At the end [of your analysis] you put a zero. It is sort of the conclusion. *Tong pai ne tsu tik* — when there is nothing else you put a zero. That zero serves as the basis for creating another point. That is why it is so important. If you regard the zero as nothing then you cannot create anything else. One zero would end everything. But it doesn't.

In addition to that, in the Guhyasamaja, Tsongkhapa came up with the five paths. It is Tsongkhapa who created this order, these steps. And even after that, he still insisted to learn from Manjushri, making outer, inner, secret and suchness offerings, with profound faith and supplications, and he learned from him the combination of sutra and tantra, which is what we call the *nying gyu me ngag*: the practical instructions that really come through from ear to ear. This is quicker than quickest to achieve the Buddha Vajradhara's stage. This is what Tsongkhapa asked for and this is what the Lama Chöpa is.

The Lama Chöpa will tell you about the yoga of the lama inseparable from the yidam as the backbone of your practice. Someone claiming to be a lama is also not enough. It has to be a lama who leads you through the whole path, not only the sutra, but also the tantra path. In the case of the yidam, any yidam will also not do. It has to be the Guhyasamaja, Heruka and Yamantaka altogether. The protectors also should not be simple protectors, but it should be: the six-armed Mahakala, the Dharma King Chögyal and Vaisravana. Gungtang Jampelyang says that the three scopes of the Lamrim path are protected by those three<sup>42</sup>. These were Manjushri's words to Tsongkhapa.

*Kadam trül pei leg bam*. The actual teaching of the Lama Chöpa comes through the *Kadam trül pei leg bam*. This is the mystical book of the Kadam tradition. It is in some kind of written form. I don't think it is a book like a written book. It appears to the one who it is meant for and disappears by itself when that person is no longer there. It travels from one person who is responsible to the next. It is Manjushri in form of a message. That is why it is known as *Kadam trül pei leg bam* or manifested book. The essence of that in word form is the Lama Chöpa. It was known that this Kadam manifested book<sup>43</sup> was with Pabongka. There is no question about that. Then it was obviously with Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche thereafter and Kyabje Ling Rinpoche and after that to Kyabje Ratö Rinpoche. To the present, Manjushri in the form of a book has been continuously followed (*i.e.* the lineage has been continued, not broken). Of course, it goes only to one person, who keeps it completely quiet, you only get quotations here and there. That is what is called 'the ear-whispered manifested book', which is really a manifestation. I believe it sort of appears to the individual, who can read it and get information. My personal experience of it was with Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche.<sup>44</sup>

One day I was visiting Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche and he recommended to me to do the practice of the protector *Tsimera*, which is my father's protector. There is one text on that by the Nyingma lama Nyari Kenchen. Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche advised me to do that. I did know these words by heart. And I thought there is no way and no reason why Kyabje Rinpoche would know this practice by heart. So I thought that this time I had something more to say than he would remember. I started to say the words, but before I knew it, Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche was saying the words too, even before me. He was look-

<sup>42</sup> More on the protectors on page 26.

<sup>43</sup> More in Gehlek Rinpoche, *Ganden Lha Gyema*, entry 'Kadam manifested book'.

<sup>44</sup> Here Rinpoche relates the story of the Tsimera prayer. See: Gehlek Rinpoche *Ganden Lha Gyema*, Ch. IV.

ing in front, as if he was reading from somewhere in the air. It had to be the *Ka dam trül pai leg bam* that gave him the answers. Up to him it is obvious who had the *Kadam trül pei leg bam* and in this way you have everything you need. You have the grounded, straightforward path and also the mystical touch.

Manjushri gave this teaching to Tsongkhapa who kept it completely secret. That is why he wrote the commentary to the *Fifty verses of Guru devotion*<sup>45</sup>, and also the large commentary of Guhyasamaja and to the Six Yogas of Naropa – all because of that reason.

Now, all these things you are supposed to learn orally. There is not going to be anything more in writing, although now Tsongkhapa's commentary on the Six Yogas is available in English.<sup>46</sup> These teachings are all coming from the *Ka dam trül pei leg bam*.

While Manjushri and Tsongkhapa were communicating, no one else was present but a couple of fortunate samsaric gods and one human besides Tsongkhapa, a guy called **Togden Jampel Gyatso**.<sup>47</sup> Later, Tsongkhapa handed everything over to him. Actually the practice lineage starts with him. A number of people will tell you that the Gelugpas know how to talk and the others know how to practice. But that is not true. It is just propaganda. Togden Jampel Gyatso established the Ganden Kagyu tradition, the so-called *Ga den drub jug*, particularly emphasizing practicing in retreat. In the Mahamudra lineage-prayer<sup>48</sup> the fourth verse says, "O Togden Jampel Gyatso, principal holder of the doctrine of the lineage of accomplishment of Je Tsongkhapa, the Son of Manjushri..." which means he was the lineage holder of Tsongkhapa, who was Manjushri's disciple.

Also Tsongkhapa gave this teaching to Khedrub Je,<sup>49</sup> one of his two closest disciples. After Tsongkhapa passed away, Khedrub Je had five visions of Tsongkhapa. This is relevant here. One day when Khedrub Je was very sad, making offerings and praying strongly, Tsongkhapa appeared to him as a sort of Indian royal prince riding on a huge tiger and talked with him. He is a very strong martial art kind of guy riding on a tiger, wearing a sword and in the other hand a skull cup. Once, he appeared in Tsongkhapa form riding an elephant; once, in the form of a young boy sitting on a throne lifted by five young boys, and once, Tsongkhapa appeared as Manjushri riding on a lion. [In the fifth vision Tsongkhapa appears in his usual form.<sup>50</sup>] Khedrub Je received five different visions, and each time Tsongkhapa gave him additional teachings and information that cleared whatever doubts he had. Both of them, Khedrub Je and Togden Jampel Gyatso, were responsible for carrying on this teaching.

They passed it on to Khedrub Je's nephew and disciple, **Baso Chökyi Gyeltsen**,<sup>51</sup> and he then to the **Mahasiddha Dharmavajra**.<sup>52</sup> Baso told Dharmavajra to go and practice it as quietly as possible, so he went completely away into a forested area of snow and rocks and stayed there all his life. He did his practice and had very few disciples. Particularly to him Tsongkhapa showed himself in a vision one night and gave him an additional teaching on this: generating the three beings within the body of the lama. In those days it was very difficult to get such teachings. Not only did Dharmavajra obtain enlightenment, but when he passed he did so in the form of a rainbow. Just before he passed away, he thought, "I can't take this with me, I have to give it to somebody, who should I give it to?" He thought about it and decided to give it to **Ensapa Lozang Döndrub**.<sup>53</sup> That is where the *En sa nying gyü*<sup>54</sup> begins. The *Ganden Lha Gyema* comes through the *Se gyü* tradition.

<sup>45</sup> Tsongkhapa, *The Fulfillment of all Hopes*, transl. Gareth Sparham.

<sup>46</sup> Glenn H. Mullin, *Tsongkhapa's Six Yogas of Naropa*.

<sup>47</sup> 1356-1428. First one in the combined Gelug/Kagyü lineage of mahamudra explanation. Ref. Dalai Lama, *The Gelug/Kagyü lineage of Mahamudra*, p. 109.

<sup>48</sup> Clarification by Aura: 'The lineage of the *Lama Chöpa* and the lineage given in the *Mahamudra Lineage Prayer* are the same and not the same. They are the same, because Mahamudra has no separate lineage, and are not the same because Mahamudra can be taught as separate lineage'. For the names also see Janice D. Willis, *Enlightened Beings: Stories from the Ganden Oral Tradition*, p. 99-100.

<sup>49</sup> 1385-1438.

<sup>50</sup> More details in Glenn Mullin: *The mystical arts of Tibet – Featuring personal sacred objects of The Dalai Lama*.

<sup>51</sup> Literature: Janice D. Willis, *Enlightened Being: Life Stories from the Ganden Oral Tradition*, p. 43-47

<sup>52</sup> The same person as Drupchen Chökyi Dorje. Literature: Janice D. Willis, *Enlightened Being: Life Stories from the Ganden Oral Tradition*, p. 49-55.

<sup>53</sup> Also referred to as Gyelwa Ensapa. Literature: Janice D. Willis, *Enlightened Beings: Stories from the Ganden Oral Tradition*, p. 57-70.

<sup>54</sup> The oral tradition from Ensa.

*Gyelwa Ensapa.* Ensapa Lozang Döndrub was a very well-known incarnate lama, just like Milarepa, extremely highly developed. His life-story is very similar to Milarepa's story. At the age of seventeen Ensapa was quite sick. At that moment the great Dharmavajra came as a beggar to the door of his house, begging for food. Ensapa listened to the voice of the beggar, who was reciting one of Tsongkhapa's praises to Buddha. Ensapa, seventeen years of age and sick, listened and hearing the sound he couldn't help it, he got up and ran downstairs to see who that person was, in spite of the objections from his parents and house-attendants. He saw the beggar outside, and when he looked at him he saw a dignified-looking old monk with long white hair and a long beard. Ensapa brought this very majestic old beggar monk into the house, meanwhile thinking, "Who is this?" And the beggar kept on looking at him. Ensapa was known for having visions from the age of four or five onwards. Suddenly, he realized that this was one of the greatest living beings on earth. He immediately requested teachings. The beggar said, "Well, I'm happy you've asked, but you get yourself better first and then within such and such a time come to such and such a mountain." Ensapa recovered and went to that mountain, where the five sister deities, Trishana live. He went there and met Dharmavajra, made a mandala offering, and received the teachings, particularly this particular tradition. Actually, Dharmavajra handed the 'manifested book' over to Gyelwa Ensapa.

Like Milarepa, Ensapa went on to compose many songs. In one of them, he said, "The earlier Milarepa and today's Lozang Döndrub don't need anything else." So it is very important, Tsongkhapa's guru-yoga.

Ensapa himself attained enlightenment within his lifetime and he wrote a very short text on it. So Gyelwa Ensapa is the one who composed this guru yoga based on Tsongkhapa and Manjushri. He gave it to Kedrub Sangye Yeshe and he to the First Panchen Lama, who wrote this Lama Chöpa text. Ensapa kept it as completely confidential and taught it to two or three disciples, up to the first Panchen Lama, **Lozang Chökyi Gyeltsen**.<sup>55</sup> The First Panchen Lama decided that if he kept it this confidential, it would disappear one day, so he made it public. Panchen Lozang Chögyen took most of it out of this 'ear-whispered manifested book'. The essence of this, the root or seed, was given by Manjushri to Tsongkhapa and then Panchen Lozang Chögyen was the one who wrote the Lama Chöpa text we have. So, up to Panchen Losang Chögyen it was difficult to get this teaching, but after that it has become a common practice.

The Lama Chöpa has become so important. Now you can read it and practice it, you live with it and die with it. This is how it came about. And this is why today we have the *Lama Chöpa* in Tibet. You can say that, if you sit you sit with the Lama Chöpa, when you get up you get up with the Lama Chöpa, when you sleep you sleep with the Lama Chöpa and when you die you die with the Lama Chöpa. That is how it works. In the Gelugpa tradition, even little kids memorize it. It is all because of the First Panchen Lama that we were able to bring it here.

As I told you, I received this teaching from **Trijang Rinpoche**, forty years ago. So, from Tsongkhapa up to my late master, Kyabje Trijang Dorjechang, there is an unbroken lineage. Not only unbroken, but also each of the lineage masters, everyone except me, obtained highest enlightenment within his lifetime.

*Lineage prayer.* We have two lineage prayers, one long and one slightly shorter one. Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, who had the teaching from Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche at the same time when I was there, gives the shorter lineage prayer and I put in the longer one. However, as the lineage is very long, during this teaching we'll do a really short version of it.<sup>56</sup> That is, we'll do the first three verses and from there jump to the ninth lineage lama, because that is Panchen Lozang Chögyen, the author of our text.

(Again, they translate that here as 'First Panchen Lama'. I don't understand why Western translators keep on writing down every bit of information they know. They add to the text so that all their translations become commentaries. You know, our teachers used to tell us not to behave like sparrows who cannot keep their mouths shut if they have seven grains in their stomachs. They say "chi, chi, chi," all the time, because their stomachs can barely hold seven grains. Western translators put in any information they find, because they cannot keep it. They have to inform us that "this is the first Panchen Lama," and they may even go on and say, "he was the first to be recognized as Panchen Lama, but he may not have been the first one..." Some may go to that extent. That is too much writing.)

<sup>55</sup> Literature: D. Willis, *Enlightened Beings, Life Stories from the Ganden Oral Tradition*, p. 73-82 and 85-96. Also see page 6.

<sup>56</sup> The full lineage prayer in English is to be found in Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light of Bliss*, p. 227. Also to be found in Janice D. Willis, *Enlightened Beings, Life Stories from the Ganden Oral Tradition*, p. 101-106.

Then we jump down to the 20th lineage lama, Ngulchu Dharmabhadra. I want to include him because I am using his outlines and commentary.<sup>57</sup> Then we go to 33, 34 and 35<sup>58</sup>. These are the last in the lineage.

Each time when you jump, say you jump from verse from three to verse nine, from verse nine to verse twenty, and from twenty to thirty-three, then after the jump, you change the *la* behind the name of the lineage-master into *bar*. E.g at the end of the ninth verse [*i.e.* before the refrain], *Jetsün Lozang Chögyen la söl wa dep* becomes *Jetsun Lozang Chögyen bar söl wa dep*. That way instead of ‘to’, it becomes ‘up to’. When we recite the lineage in this retreat<sup>59</sup> we will do it in this shortened way; when you read the whole lineage at home, it remains *la*.

This is enough for the first outline heading, the source [and lineage]. This teaching came continuously, as a living tradition from Buddha Vajradhara to the late Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche.

### *Lama Chöpa Commitment*

Somehow the Lamrim teachings, the Yamantaka teachings, and Vajrayogini teachings have been taught many times, but the *Lama Chöpa* teachings have not been done much at all. In my case, this is the first time I have done this, but also others somehow left it out. I don’t know why.

One reason, of course, is the commitment. A number of people have asked whether there is a commitment to having received these teachings. There is definitely a commitment for this, for sure, and I don’t have the power to reduce it or to say you don’t have to read the *Lama Chöpa* everyday. I did ask Geshe Kelsang Gyatso what he did about the commitment. He said he taught three years, and forgot the commitment. “Well,” I said, “that’s convenient, but how can we do that?” He said, “I don’t think we can do it, but then what else can you do? I think it is very difficult for Western Dharma practitioners to say the *Lama Chöpa* every day and, of course, they won’t say it anyway, so maybe they can say the *Ganden Lha Gyema* with the *Migtsema*, because that’s the same thing.” It is actually the same thing, *Ganden Lha Gyema* with *Migtsema*, which I think everybody is doing.

So about the *Lama Chöpa*: I’m not saying you don’t need to do it, you should do it, okay? But really, when it becomes like paying tax for you, just do *Ganden Lha Gyema* and *Migtsema*. It doesn’t matter. If you have a taste for it and you feel like doing it, do it. You review all the paths, sutra and tantra both, the whole Lamrim plus the whole *Ngag Rim* combined together, and you can do all that in a short period. If necessary you can reduce the number of the mantras you say here and there. As long as you have the taste for it, you will like to do it, and that will be practice.

Anyway, breaking a practice commitment is not breaking a vow; if you don’t do it, you don’t break a vow, you just break a commitment. It is not like breaking the *Six Session Guru-Yoga* where you take vows in the presence of the five Buddha families, “I’ll do this, this, this.” It is not like that. The purpose of learning is to practice. The purpose of having this lineage is to practice. So, if you feel comfortable with it, you should do it every day, and if you don’t feel comfortable with it, then just read the *Ganden Lha Gyema* and say *Migtsema*.

### *What Tsongkhapa learned from Manjushri*<sup>60</sup>

Tsongkhapa had direct contact with Manjushri. He was not fully satisfied with the explanations available in Tibet at that period, so he wanted to get authentic teachings from India, but people prevented him from going. Also, even if he could have gone, it is questionable whether the authentic teachings were still available in India at all, since Muslim invaders had destroyed Indian Buddhism by the fourteenth century when Tsongkhapa lived. That’s why Tsongkhapa took the trouble to do a lot of purification and retreats and he gained direct contact with Manjushri through Lama Umapa.

From Manjushri, he received the essence of his message, the Three Principal Paths which, when combined with Vajrayana, became the *Lama Chöpa*. That is the essence of the teaching we are doing here.

<sup>57</sup> See page 237.

<sup>58</sup> Verse 33 goes to Jetsün Trinley Gyatso, *i.e.* Pabongka Rinpoche, verse 34 to Lozang Yeshe, *i.e.* Trijang Rinpoche, verse 35 to Tsawei Lama, *i.e.* to one’s root master.

<sup>59</sup> Winter retreat 1995-1996 when Ngulchu Dharmabhadra’s commentary was used. Since in the first year Rinpoche used the commentary of Kachen Yeshe Gyeltsen, one might for the shortest version jump from verse 9 to 16 and then to 20.

<sup>60</sup> Also see page 17.

Tsongkhapa himself learned, first via Lama Umapa, then via Lama Umapa acting as a translator, and later directly from Manjushri, especially about the essence of the *Uma*,<sup>61</sup> Nagarjuna's thoughts on emptiness. What did Tsongkhapa pick up from Manjushri? This:

It is not that emptiness proves non-existence – emptiness proves existence.

Existence doesn't prove absolutism – existence proves emptiness.

It is just opposite from what you'd think, so it is confusing when you first hear it. Normally, when you see something that you know is not there, it is not true. Right? But Tsongkhapa tries to tell you about emptiness, the wisdom he picked up from Manjushri: appearance proves emptiness and emptiness proves existence. Get it? If you are searching for emptiness by looking for zero, you are going to find zero, you cannot find emptiness. If you keep on counting from one to nine, you have to put a zero to make it ten; that is how counting will prove the zero-figure down. Likewise, when you see existence, it will prove emptiness. When you see emptiness, it doesn't prove existence, that is a special matter; that will come later. That is also the essence of *Mahamudra*, which will come later. When you see emptiness, you should be able to see interdependent relationship.

Tsongkhapa also learned from Manjushri directly the levels of the completion stage, their number, why they are five, and what follows what.

What happened is this. After a while, when Manjushri became very close and was talking with Tsongkhapa all the time, Tsongkhapa's teacher Lama Umapa, who had been the first translator between Manjushri and Tsongkhapa, wrote a letter to Tsongkhapa saying, "You are my student for whom I helped to interpret Manjushri. Now I want you to talk to Manjushri and get a proper understanding from him on the following questions: How can an individual become a buddha within a lifetime? Is there a such a way, or not? If there is such a way, what must one do? Get that from Manjushri straight, ask a number of questions again and again. Finally, when you think you have understood it, go back to Manjushri and check with him to make sure that you have understood right. And then send it to me." That is what Lama Umapa wrote to Tsongkhapa. Tsongkhapa did that. (I will take a little time on this, so don't be bored, this is important.) He made countless outer, inner, secret and suchness offerings to Manjushri and then made a great strong request. The essence of it was: is there a way that an individual can become totally enlightened within the life span of one life? Manjushri replied: 'It is possible, but it depends'. And Manjushri told Tsongkhapa about what one has to acquire in order to obtain enlightenment within one's lifetime.

*The union of no-more learning.*<sup>62</sup> **Enlightenment** means two things: *chos sku* and *gzugs sku*, normally translated as *dharmakaya* or truth body, and *rupakaya* or form body, in other words, mental enlightenment and physical enlightenment. You have to have these two, Manjushri told Tsongkhapa. You also have to have them simultaneously, not in turn one after the other; mind-level enlightenment and body-level enlightenment have to go together.

We have a problem, we have to take things in turns. When we think, imagine, or visualize, we have to think turn by turn: if we imagine that our mind is fully enlightened, we will lose the body, even in our imagination; when we think about the body-enlightenment we will lose the mind-part. We have to alternate between absolute and relative. Manjushri is saying that you have to have simultaneously not only an imagined but a fully enlightened body and a fully enlightened mind. This is the whole idea of the phrase 'no going and no coming'.

When we look in a mirror and see our reflection, to acknowledge that it is our reflection, we have to switch over to our mind here and think, "Oh, that is my body," and then we have to switch back again to looking at the reflection in the mirror. We do that very quickly so you don't realize it, but in slow motion you would see that you don't function simultaneously.

In the Zen tradition, they use the example of the moon with its reflection. The moon doesn't have to go in each and every little bit of water, yet the reflections are there. That is the idea of simultaneous functioning. At this level, we have a problem even imagining that. In our imagination we have to alternate; actualizing them together is far more difficult. Manjushri said that in order to become fully

<sup>61</sup> Skt. *Madhyamika*, the Middle Way philosophy.

<sup>62</sup> Tib. *mi slob b'ai zung jug*, the path of no more learning in Vajrayana.



enlightened within one lifetime, you have to get body and mind together. In order to have them together, you have to train yourself to be able to function at that level, to function with body and mind together.

Remember, the Lamrim tells you that at the enlightened level, body and mind function at the same frequency. It says that at the enlightened level there is no difference: if your mind is there, your body is there. We say that is the extraordinary quality of enlightened beings, and, at the Lamrim level, we leave it there. This is what it is, attaining the quality of functioning together simultaneously, on the same frequency, without alternation. In order to get that result, you have to have a practice.

*The learner's union.*<sup>63</sup> What practice corresponds to that? What is the cause of achieving that extraordinary body, which functions on the same frequency as extraordinary mind? The direct, immediate cause is the illusion body, *gyu lu*. The direct cause for the extraordinary mind is bliss-void wisdom. The bliss-void wisdom [or clear light] and the illusion body join together.

When you become fully enlightened, body and mind will function on the same frequency, known as bliss-void simultaneously born wisdom [Tib. *lhen kye ye she*] Immediately before that, you're going to mix together the illusion body and what we normally call clear light [Tib. *ösel*], which is actually the bliss-void nature of wisdom. These two come together when the process once again comes out. The joining of these two, illusion body and clear light, is called the **union needing practice**, which is immediately before enlightenment. So, before they join together we have the clear light here, the illusion body there.

*Development of the illusory body.*<sup>64</sup> Now another step back. Where am I going to get that **illusion body**? And where am I going to get that **clear light**? Both come from the point of dissolving in Vajrayana practice.

In each sadhana, you have a point where you say, "OM SVABHAVA SHUDDHAH SARVA DHARMA SVABHAVA SHUDDHO HAM. I and all these objects of refuge and all other phenomena are in the nature of emptiness."<sup>65</sup> At the end you'll come to the conclusion that all is empty.

How do you reach that conclusion? Think and imagine: first you see the whole universe, all existence, very bright, then you see its nature, and you start to dissolve it into the nature of emptiness. The outer universe dissolves, the mandala dissolves, your body dissolves, then you yourself dissolve into the letter HUM. The U-part of the HUM dissolves to the body of the HA, the HA-body dissolves into the HA-head, which dissolves into the crescent moon, which dissolves into the drop or *tigle*, which dissolves into the squiggle or *nada*, and finally all disappears. You also visualize the eight different stages of the dying process, which is the time you are separating, simultaneously with the dissolving system of the seed-syllable. That will draw you to the conclusion that all is empty.

Where do you go from there? How are you going to come out of that emptiness? You're going to *repeat the whole process* by which you went in, only outwards or *reversed*. Learning how to rise in the reverse way is the step behind the illusion body, which produces the illusion body to you. You reverse the whole procedure and then finally you rise. In the case of Yamantaka, you rise as Manjushri.

At our sadhana level, we call that the development stage.<sup>66</sup> You really are developing everything, building up one on top of the other: the basic foundation of the mandala, the element-mandalas, above that the ground, above that the protection realm, within that the inner protection ring, within that the source of joy, [the triangular], within the triangular the vajra ground, within that the whole physical appearance of enlightenment, which is like Buddha Vairochana who becomes the whole mandala, and within the mandala you build yourself into a totally enlightened figure, with your senses and everything as beings. In the case of Vajrayogini, you have a body mandala on top, in the case of Heruka too. In the case of Guhyasamaja you don't have a body mandala, but you put deities on your physical body.<sup>67</sup> Those

<sup>63</sup> Tib. *slob b'ai zung jug*; the path of meditation in Vajrayana. Also see: Gehlek Rimpoche, *Ganden Lha Gyema*

<sup>64</sup> The words 'illusory body' and 'illusion body' refer to the same. Achievement of the impure illusory body is part of the path of preparation in Vajrayana. Chart: D. Cozort, *Highest Yoga Tantra*, p. 62. Literature on the paths in Vajrayana: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Tantric Grounds and Paths*.

<sup>65</sup> In the Yamantaka sadhana: 'I myself, the merit-field Deities, and all other things are relativistic constructions, free of the four extremes such as absolutism or nihilism, all become the selfless reality of emptiness'.

<sup>66</sup> Path of accumulation, first path in Vajrayana.

<sup>67</sup> Clarification by Rinpoche: 'Though it is usually called body-mandala it is not so in the strict sense. You do not transform the body-materials itself. Better to say deities put on the body'. Also see Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 91.

steps are learning how to create an illusion body. That is the reason why you have to say the sadhana: by saying the sadhana every day, you actually are building your enlightened body.

Unfortunately, due to shortage of time and so on we do as short a sadhana as possible and read as fast as possible. That is our problem. But if you go slowly, this is what it is. This is exactly how you're building the enlightened state; this practice is the cause for that particular body called 'illusion body'. It is how you build it.

Each one of the *maha anu yoga tantras*, Yamantaka, Heruka, Hevajra, and so forth, tell you how to build it up very nicely. However, the outstanding tantra recommended for building the *illusion body* is the Guhyasamaja tantra<sup>68</sup>. The thirty-two deities Guhyasamaja<sup>69</sup> is the king of the father tantras. Guhyasamaja with the thirty-two deities mandala has a different way of dealing with the outer energies. The twenty-five emotions dissolving into the four empties<sup>70</sup> is the special way it has of bringing about the illusion body. In the Guhyasamaja practice, all twenty-five different 'emotions'<sup>71</sup> are each given the physical appearance of a deity, which you put in the different parts of the body, forehead, eyes, limbs, and so on. In the Yamantaka practice, you just generate deities on your sense-organs, eyes, ears, and so on.

In the Heruka body mandala each one of your energy-channels [Tib. *nadis*], are made into a deity. Not close to the heart-level: the sixty-four deities are put into the different parts of the body, at the outer tips of the channels. In the case of Vajrayogini, the body-mandala is even brought inside, right at the heart-level. There the letter BAM bursts into four, and each of the four pieces transforms into a dakini, and those four are surrounded by thirty-two deities. You change to deity-form not your veins and energies at a distance from your heart, but the inner tips of the channels, right near your heart-level. What does that do? That really helps in a very special way to bring up emptiness, to bring up the *clear light*. That's why they [Heruka-Vajrayogini] are called mother tantra.<sup>72</sup>

In short, order to bring about the union of illusion body and wisdom, you need the illusion body and you need the clear light. To be able to bring about the illusion body, you need to be able to train yourself up to that level, and for the clear light you need to be able to train yourself to bring the wisdom up to that level. That is what Manjushri told Tsongkhapa. That is what you need. In order to bring about that illusion body, the best thing for you to do is the Guhyasamaja practice.

*Development of the clear light.*<sup>73</sup> In order to bring about the emptiness, the clear light, what do you have to do? All the channels in your body, the root-channel and the branch-channels, and the air or the energy floating within those channels, must be brought together at your heart-level.

What do you have at the heart-level? The indestructible drop. You remember, in the *Ganden Lha Gyema* we open the indestructible drop, put Lama Tsongkhapa in it, close it, tie it, seal it, and it will remain until the indestructible drop will be opened.<sup>74</sup> This is the essence of our being which, according to this tradition, is at the heart-level. That's why Oriental people think the mind at the heart-level, while Westerners think the mind at the brain-level. It doesn't matter where the mind is, we're not talking about that, we're talking about the essence of our being, which I don't think is mind, anyway.

There are two types of indestructible: indestructible until you die and indestructible forever. The 'indestructible drop until death' consists of the essence of what we got from the father, the semen-part, and the essence of what we got from the mother, the egg-part, somehow sealed together. As long as it doesn't open you live, when it opens you die. It is what holds you together in life. When you die, you become a bardowa, an intermediate-state being. A bardowa has no control, the moment he thinks of something he goes there. Since bardowas like to roam about, they would never be able to take a proper rebirth, holding steady in one place. This indestructible drop somehow has the power to cut the roaming

<sup>68</sup> Root text *Guhyasamaja tantra*, Peter Gäng (transl.), *Das Tantra der Verborgenen Vereinigung*.

<sup>69</sup> Picture of Guhyasamaja: J. Landaw and A. Weber, *Images of Enlightenment*, plate 19; R. Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion, The Sacred Art of Tibet*, p. 277.

<sup>70</sup> Literature: D. Cozort, *Highest Yoga Tantra*, p. 73-76, Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light of Bliss*, p. 76, 86. Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Tantric Grounds and Paths*, p. 166-170.

<sup>71</sup> The twenty-five coarse objects which dissolve at death: the 5 aggregates, the 4 elements, the 6 sources, the 5 objects, the 5 [basic] wisdoms. Yangchen Gawai Lodoe, *Paths and Grounds of Guhyasamaja*, p. 163, nt. 59. Also see Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light of Bliss*, p. 76-87.

<sup>72</sup> A mother tantra principally gives methods for attaining the clear light. Example of a mother tantra: Heruka tantra, which has the Heruka and the Vajrayogini practice.

<sup>73</sup> When the actual clear light is developed the path of seeing in Vajrayana is achieved.

<sup>74</sup> See Gehlek Rimpoche, *Ganden Lha Gyema*

of a bardowa, to hold it together. It holds it as long as possible and that's why you're alive. That indestructible drop has a white portion and a red portion, from the semen and the egg.

In order to bring that greatest clear light within you, you must be able to hold all the energies at the center of your central channel. In order to do this you will go through an experience like dying. You are not dying, you only go through an experience like when you are dying. That dying experience will bring tremendous joy or relief or relaxation.

There is a need for the special powerful joy that this can bring. You know, we all experience joy, that's why we all have sex. Sexual joy also has different degrees, you can have good sex or bad sex. It is the same here; the joy you need is great joy. The great joy you try to bring about is actually right in the center of your psychic body. Normally the energies move in your right and left channels only. When the air or energy moves you may feel relaxed, or you may feel bad, you may feel achy, you may feel good, *etcetera*. All this is because of the movement of energy within your body, in the side channels.

Here we are talking about bringing the energy right to the center of your psychic body, where normally nothing is happening. The central channel normally is a completely dead channel with nothing happening, because of the too strong powers of anger and attachment. Anger and attachment push our emotions in such a way that they move in either the right or the left channel, and as a result of that, the central channel is shut down, unused, and becomes almost a dead channel.

In order to make that 'dead' channel wake up, we bring the energy to function in the central channel itself rather than in the side-channels. This will bring a tremendous joy in the physical body and that physical joy will give mental relaxation. We all know that, right? So that's the essence of it.

The ordinary *tigle* (drop) or ordinary semen (in case of a male) is not good enough to bring that sensation of tremendous joy within the center of the central channel, and apart from that sensation there is no way to get through. As dripping semen is one of the root downfalls in the Vajrayana practice<sup>75</sup> I once asked Kyabje Song Rinpoche how to work with this. He said, "Oh, don't worry about that, the semen that we release comes from somewhere in the lower part of the body, from around the kidneys, not from the forehead. We don't have the power yet to melt the essence right from the crown down."

You know, Heruka and other mother-tantra practitioners and even Hindu practitioners put a little crescent moon on their forehead, because the moon represents kundalini power. Kundalini is referred to as the 'source of joy' and the 'essence of life'. That's what you have up there at your crown. In the practice, you melt that down and it drips through the center of the psychic body, where nothing was happening before. The ticklish feeling and the excitement that it's going to give you is beyond imagination, because the center of the psychic body is the most sensitive area, and now there is a movement within it, which really goes way beyond the g-spot.

In order to be able to bring that about, you need to be able to bring up the *tummo*, the psychic heat. It is a powerful laser-beam type of heat, which shoots from the navel up to the crown, melts the white drop,<sup>76</sup> lets it drip inside, lets you experience all this, pushes it back, then doubles the experience, and finally puts it back in the place where it belongs. That is what it is all about when we talk about *bharnzag*, the essence in the mother tantra practice; that's what it comes down to. All these are necessary for the individual to be able to have the clear light.

In short, the dissolving system of the twenty-five aspects of the four elements will become the four empties.<sup>77</sup> The number four empty is called clear light. That very clear light will rise in the form of an illusion body. Also that illusion body will dissolve into the emptiness and rise again. These are the difficult points.

The essence of the clear light is: dissolving all energies in oneself, *i.e.* the root and branch energies that flow through the root and branch channels, into the heart level indestructible energy; not only bringing them together at the center of the heart chakra, but also making them remain there; not only remain, but also dissolving them in there. Three stages: entering, remaining, dissolving.

Plus, in order to bring in the joy, you need the *tummo* teachings. The *tummo* practice develops the heat at the navel level, technically called the 'sun mandala'. The heat of the sun mandala melts the moon mandala, which is supposed to be in our crown. This, again, is a very profound teaching. Although it is the female tantra that talks about this, the physical aspects are male. When talking about the moon

<sup>75</sup> One of the mother tantra vows: never release seminal fluid.

<sup>76</sup> Technically called white bodhicitta.

<sup>77</sup> Literature: Lati Rinpoche and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Death, Intermediate State and Rebirth*.

mandalawe refer to the crown chakra where is what is technically called ‘bodhicitta’. That bodhicitta, known as moon mandala, melts through the power of the sun mandala. That going forward and backward, known as the yoga of rising and dripping, is the system of developing the eight joys. These are also necessary to have.

In order to gain that, the prerequisite is the development stage. That is, generating yourself, all your physical aspects, the skandhas, in the form of a yidams and pure land.

Such practices are the essence of mother tantra, of which the essence is the Heruka yab yum tantra.

*Three most important yidams.* Manjushri said to Tsongkhapa that in order to achieve enlightenment within one lifetime you need: 1) the illusion body, which the Guhyasamaja practice will be able to provide you with; 2) the clear light; the basis for bringing that level is clearly taught and practiced in the Heruka tantra,<sup>78</sup> a mother tantra. And in order to have both of them done perfectly, since the obstacles are so powerful and there are so many difficulties, you need protection, a powerful yidam, Yamantaka. So Manjushri sold three practices to Tsongkhapa: Guhyasamaja, Heruka and Yamantaka, and said, “In order to receive enlightenment, you need this on the body-level, this on the mind level, and this for your protection. Here are the three deities that will provide these things.”

If there were time, I would tell you about the five qualities of Yamantaka. Anyway, just to remind you a little bit, Yamantaka’s hand-implements are the threatening mudra, intestines, stove, katanga and a spear poked through from the ass to the mouth, like a barbecue stick. These five give you the special messages of the five special qualities of Yamantaka.<sup>79</sup>

That’s what Tsongkhapa bought from Manjushri. And that’s why, in the Gelugpa tradition, these are considered the three most important yidams. Manjushri sold them for bringing enlightenment. So, these practices, the practice of **Guhyasamaja** and the practice of **Heruka** and the practice of **Yamantaka**, are able to provide that.

*Stages.* And also, it is *not* just the sadhana we say, but being able to do it at the level of the *completion stage*. On the completion stage you have, in the case of Guhyasamaja, five levels, five steps. Like in the Lamrim where it is said that the recognition of precious human life pushes you automatically to realize the importance of it, just like that these five steps<sup>80</sup> in Vajrayana will push you from one to the other. They are completely systematic and dependent on one another; if you miss step two you can never hope to have step three. Just like in Lamrim, Vajrayana systematically goes from the beginning to end. Everybody is now very much aware of that, right?

*Development Stage.*<sup>81</sup> In order to have the five steps in the completion stage practice, you have to have the development stage. The development stage is building yourself. We went through that in the Yamantaka teachings. There is a **gross development stage** and a **subtle development stage**. You remember, in the subtle development stage you produce a little dot, one to two, two to four, four to eight, eight to sixteen, sixteen to thirty-two, thirty-two to sixty-four, *etcetera*. Producing is no problem but bringing them back in their proper order and without making a mistake is a problem, remember?<sup>82</sup> Going from one to two and being able to bring them back to one is no problem, from two to four is also not difficult, from four to eight becomes a little confusing already, these little dots sitting around going into one. That is the subtle development stage. They teach you to do that, and what they’re trying to do is build up your focus and concentration. Without concentration, we’ll make mistakes in the stages or mistakes in the order. In one way, Vajrayana is very relaxed, in another way it is very rigid. Because of

<sup>78</sup> When Heruka tantra of Heruka practice is mentioned, Vajrayogini is included, because part of Heruka.

<sup>79</sup> See Gehlek Rimpoche, *Solitary-Yamantaka Teachings on the Generation Stage*.

<sup>80</sup> The completion stage has a division in five stages according to Nagarjuna’s *Panchakrama*. (Text in: R. Thurman, *Essential Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 250-260). See: D. Cozort, *Highest Yoga Tantra* p. 65-67 and p. 170 nt. 114. See Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Tantric Grounds and Paths* p. 108. This is not to be confused with the five paths in Vajrayana; for that see Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Tantric Grounds and Paths* 49-52. For a useful chart of correlations see D. Cozort, *Highest Yoga Tantra* p. 62.

<sup>81</sup> Also called generation stage or creation stage.

<sup>82</sup> Method during the subtle generation stage to develop meditative clarity and stability, according to the Yamantaka practice. Taught during the Vajrayana teachings October 1994. Gehlek Rimpoche, *Solitary-Yamantaka Teachings on the Generation Stage*. Also see D. Cozort, *Highest Yoga Tantra*, p. 49, about an entire mandala full of deities and other features inside a tiny drop as object of subtle generation stage meditation, and Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Tantric Grounds and Paths*, p. 100, about Vajrayogini’s body mandala as object of subtle generation stage meditation..

the reduction of the delusions, bringing enlightenment is rigid and therefore the training is also very rigid in one way, though in another way it is very relaxed. That's why you cannot make a mistake.

*Prerequisites for practicing the Vajrayana paths.* In order to practice the development stage you must have had a proper initiation, four<sup>83</sup> complete initiations. In order to receive the initiations, you have to have the three Lamrim levels, common with the lower level, common with the medium level and the Mahayana level. We have a saying in Tibetan:

If you go from right to left you'll reach to the woman who sells you bread;  
if you go from left to right you'll reach to the woman who sells you bread.

So, whether you go from the top level of enlightenment down or from the bottom level up in showing the necessary paths, you'll come to the same point.

*Spiritual mentor.* Manjushri goes on with his selling, by saying that in order to have those paths which you must have, you also need a lama, a master or guru, who guides you. This should not be somebody who only knows a few things here and there, that will not do. The person must be able to lead individuals on the perfect path, without making mistakes, without getting them mixed up. At the very least, that person himself must have meditated a little bit and have had a few experiences here and there. Not only that, he or she must also be very kind and compassionate, able to share with the disciples whatever they need to practice. A master must be able to share that with the disciples and be able to lead the disciples through all the paths. Not only that, that master should also know the different vows, the vows of self-liberation [*pratimoksha* vows], the vows of a bodhisattva, and the vows of Vajrayana, and practice them.

The qualities of a spiritual friend for an individual practitioner are not those of an ordinary friend; that will not do. What is needed is a friend who will support your practice and who has at least understanding of your practice, if not profound faith. The friend should have a proper understanding of what you are doing, otherwise he or she will be an obstacle. (These are still Manjushri's words to Tsongkhapa going on.) He says that a friend with broken commitments, a friend with a bad influence or influenced by ghosts, meaning being very skeptical of everything or wanting things to be too simple and too juicy, is also not fit.

*Protectors.* Also not just anybody will do as protector for a practitioner. Manjushri not only sold three yidams, he also sold three protectors here, together. In order to have a good understanding and development of the 'common with the lower level', you need **Dharma King Chögyal**<sup>84</sup> as a protector; he is Manjushri's manifestation. In order to have a good 'seeking freedom from the circle of existence', **Vaisravana** is recommended as protector. And, for love and compassion, you have **Mahakala**, Avalokiteshvara's manifestation, as protector. Mahakala, Dharma King Chögyal and Vaisravana, are known as the protectors of the three scopes.<sup>85</sup> You do not necessarily have to do the practices of these three protectors in conjunction with the Lama Chöpa on a daily basis. It is not compulsory. They are just there in general. These are the known, unquestioned protectors. They are generally accepted.

In addition, Manjushri goes on, all paths are either a method path or a wisdom path; there is no third type of path. All method paths are protected by six-armed Mahakala; all wisdom paths are protected by Dharma King Chögyal.

*Lamas, yidams and protectors.* I just want to say something to clarify the difference between Lama, yidam and protector. A Lama is the guru from whom you are taking the teachings or it is Lama Buddha Shakyamuni or Lama Tsongkhapa.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Vase initiation, secret initiation, wisdom initiation, word initiation.

<sup>84</sup> Also called Kalarupa, Yama Dharmaraja or Inner Yama.

<sup>85</sup> The Dharma King Chögyal is said to be the protector of the lower, Vaisravana of the medium and Mahakala of the great scope. Ref. and reasons: Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in Our Hands*, vol 1, p. 164-165, Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, p. 178-179.

<sup>86</sup> When you say Lama Tsongkhapa, it means: your root guru in the form of Je Tsongkhapa. The same goes for Lama Buddha Shakyamuni.

The yidams are the deities for which you have a mental commitment. *Yi* means mind. The enlightened beings have appeared in a physical form with which you have a mental commitment. They are the deities such as Guhyasamaja, Heruka, Yamantaka, Hevajra, Kalachakra, Tara, *etc.* To be inseparable means that the Lama has to be the yidam and the yidam has to be the manifestation of the Lama. If you look at them as being different, you lose the total foundation. This is what happened to Marpa. He went to see Naropa and Naropa one day woke him up early in the morning, saying, 'He, the mandala of your yidam Hevajra is over here completely assembled in the air. Who would you like to prostrate to first, to me or to the yidam?' Marpa thought, 'The guru I can see all the time, so I should prostrate to the yidam.' At that point Naropa said,

The yidam is nothing but the manifestation of the guru and it is dissolving into me.

With that the mandala disappeared. The dualistic perception of lama and yidam is natural for us. But it is an obstacle in the Vajrayana practice. That is why the emphasis is there for the inseparability of lama and yidams.

As for the protectors, in reality they may be fully enlightened beings, but they appear as protectors. They have come as some kind of security guard, like the person who knows how to deal with the security department. So let that kind of person be in charge of the security department, rather than the Chief Executive Officer. Yet you don't make a big separation. In one way it depends how you read 'protector'. Yes, Buddha is of course a protector. But here you are making a separate category for yidams and for protectors. So it becomes like apples and oranges. In that sense, yidams are different from protectors, not in the general sense of being someone who protects. For example, Yamantaka is in the category of the wrathful yidams. The Dharma King is in the category of the protectors. He looks very much like Yamantaka, with buffalo head, two horns, *etc.*

#### *Summary of what Tsongkhapa learned from Manjushri*

Tsongkhapa's guru, Lama Umapa asked Tsongkhapa to ask Manjushri to give a short essence of the total practice, to write that down and give it to Lama Umapa as a gift. The request to Manjushri was: something to make enlightenment possible within the short span of a lifetime.

The reply of Manjushri was very interesting. In normal cases we say the dharmakaya is the mind aspect of enlightenment and the rupakaya the physical aspects; mind is first and the physical aspects follow or rupakaya follows dharmakaya. Manjushri said – not in words, I'm paraphrasing – 'If you want to make it this quick, the key here is to gain the mind aspects and the physical aspects together simultaneously.' It is very similar to our human life: the mind enters and then the body is formed. To mature the body as well as the mind takes a lot of time. It takes nine months plus at least twenty years to get fully matured physically and mentally. Enlightenment must take more time. In human life we take a lot of time and we do have a lot of obstacles in between to. So thinking about enlightenment, that development is bound to take time! Manjushri says there is something you can do simultaneously. (Note that I made this statement for our practice. It is not a statement that can stand logical arguments.) Manjushri goes on: 'In order to gain the enlightened body you need the illusion body as cause, and to gain the enlightened mind you need the clear light as cause. These two need to come together.' That means, not only at the result level but also at the cause level the process is tremendously cut!

Nagarjuna's statement about the two causes of the two enlightened bodies is commonly accepted, no matter what tradition you belong to:

The Form Body of a Buddha Arises from Collected Merit.

The Body of Truth in brief, O King, Arises from collected wisdom.

These two collections cause Buddhahood to be attained.

So in brief always rely upon merit and wisdom.

Nagarjuna, *The Precious Garland*, [Skt. *Ratnamala*], vs 212-213.

The two result kayas are caused by the two causal factors: merit and wisdom. In other words, the two, the process of rupakaya, mostly described in the Guhyasamaja tantra, and the creation of clear light taught in the Heruka tantra, Manjushri told to bring together and make them work simultaneously. By

that you cut the process time tremendously. That is the reason why the three yidams are recommended here<sup>87</sup>. The doing simultaneously is the completion level.

Also it is emphasized that the direct cause of the completion stage is the development stage. That is why in our sadhanas we have the building of the yidam body together with the building of wisdom, the OM SVABHAVA... Thus, not only at the result level, the enlightened level, also at the end of the causal level of the completion stage, and also at the causal level of the development stage, they are brought together. That is the reason why we have them both in our sadhanas: the merit and the wisdom collection.

This is also why at the sutra level compassion and wisdom are brought in together! That compassion and wisdom depend on the teachings. In the explanation they are separated in two different lineages of teaching: the Maitreya-Asanga lineage for the vast teachings, the method or compassion part, and the Manjushri-Nagarjuna lineage for the profound teachings, the wisdom. So also at the causal level you find the union of compassion and wisdom – called ‘union’ for a reason!

In short, Manjushri completely revolutionized the study and practice, re-arranged it completely. Before that, some people would emphasize the discipline; others would emphasize the magical or mystical part, *etc.* Manjushri put them together, so one can practice them combined. It has become a package practice to attain enlightenment. That is why the path is quick.

Therefore, the practitioners have to be intelligent, jewel-like people. Human mind capacity is limitless, however some of us can access that limitless capacity, and some can’t so much. What Tsongkhapa asked Manjushri is almost like saying in our language, ‘Getting the education from kindergarten up to university all together within three years, is that possible? And Manjushri says, ‘yes, it is possible, but it requires a jewel-like person: intelligent, interested, and enthusiastic.’

What we’ve talked about, Guhyasamaja, Heruka, Yamantaka, all of them made into one single little practice which you can do in one little sitting, Manjushri says, is this:

Looking at the lama as being inseparable from the yidam,  
making outer, inner, secret and suchness offerings,  
praising and requesting,  
taking the four initiations,  
and reviewing all paths of sutra and tantra,  
including especially the lojong practice.

That is the Lama Chöpa. Even though it is a short practice, it is long if you look at it as a duty, like tax you have to pay. But if you look at it as the essence that Manjushri has sold, it is the whole path put together in such a short way that you can do everything in one sitting. Manjushri said to Tsongkhapa, “This is the essence, this is unlike all other practices, it is very special.” Why? When the individual practices it, the gain is a big difference.

At that moment, Manjushri presented Tsongkhapa with the *Ensa nyingyu trül pei leg bam*,<sup>88</sup> the ‘ear-whispered manifested book’, which is Manjushri himself in the form of a book or information sheet. From Tsongkhapa, as I told you, it came down to Kyabje Trijang Dorjechang.<sup>89</sup>

## 2. The Quality of this Teaching

*At the feet of the Holy Gurus of unequalled kindness  
I bow and take refuge. I beg you to look after me  
Always and everywhere, with your great care.  
Relying on you who grant three-body great bliss  
And all ordinary attainments instantly  
Is the supreme wish-fulfilling gem.  
Respectfully I bow at your lotus feet, Diamond Master!  
This practice is second to none,  
A boundless joy and aid for the lucky disciple,  
The supreme garland necklace culled*

<sup>87</sup> For the three yidams, see p. 25.

<sup>88</sup> *nyingu sprul pa'i gles bam*

<sup>89</sup> See page 18.

*From lotus-fields of holy precepts of Sutra and Tantra.*<sup>90</sup>

These are some extra verses before the Lama Chopa starts. It says, “With respect I bow to all the kind gurus. By your great kindness, may I be protected, helped and guided for all time.” The object of prostration is the feet of the great masters. We don’t address them directly but we bow to the lowest part of their body, the feet, with the highest part of our body, the crown or forehead. So prostration, *chak tsel*, is putting the highest part of my body beneath the lowest position of the great masters. This particular verse is also to be found in the *Six Session Guru-Yoga*:

I bow at your lotus-feet, O my jewel-like guru Vajradhara.  
Your kindness heralds an instantaneous dawn of great bliss.

There also is a verse like that in the Yamantaka long sadhana:

O Jewel-like Lama who possesses the Vajra,  
out of whose kindness the state of great bliss is attained in but a single moment,  
to the lotus (beneath your) feet I bow.

In the Vajrayogini sadhana it says:

O Guru Vajra-holder, your body like a magic gem,  
your kindness instantaneously lets me reach the great bliss state.  
I bow to the lotus of your foot!

You can also find it in Guhyasamaja, Heruka, or any other *maha anu yoga* tantra practice. Why do I draw your attention to this? Wherever you look, you get the same message. The reason for guru-devotional practice is because *by the kindness of the guru enlightenment can be brought about within a short period*. That message is given in every tantra. The author of the *Lama Chöpa*, the First Panchen Lama, says,

To bring benefit to fortunate disciples there is no second method to this.  
I will compose this on the basis of Buddha’s teaching.  
I am going to write this in accordance with all the tantras and sutras and the lineage.

I will read through the whole text here, so that you get the oral transmission along with the explanation. The Panchen Lama goes on, saying,

All perfections, all good qualities, and all ordinary and extraordinary achievements,  
are definitely rooted in this, and therefore it is the essence of practice for Mahayana yogis.

Why do we have to have this? The Panchen Lama quotes [Geshe Potowa’s *Blue Annals*<sup>91</sup>]:

The beginning of practice is to have a perfect guru-devotional practice.  
from that you can develop intelligent faith, bodhimind and all other qualities.  
Therefore, this is the source and the treasure of all developments.

This relationship does not end when the person dies. It continues within the individual life after life, even beyond enlightenment. In other words, guru-devotional practice is the root of all development. We have had that outline in Lamrim, so this is a further reinforcement. His second quotation is from Tsongkhapa’s *Lines of Experience*:<sup>92</sup>

The root of all causes producing happiness here and hereafter,  
is the practice of relying, in thought and action,  
upon the sacred friend who reveals the path.  
Seeing this, follow him at any cost and please him with the offering of practice.  
I, a yogi, did that myself. You, liberation seeker, should do likewise.

In other words, he proves his statement with two quotations, one from the Indian tradition and one from Je Tsongkhapa. Quoting further from Tsongkhapa, he says that the foundation of all samsaric and non-

<sup>90</sup> This introductory verse is Joe Loizzo’s translation.

<sup>91</sup> Ref. Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 4.

<sup>92</sup> Tib. *Lam rim bdus don*, also translated as *Song of the Stages*. Gehlek Rimpoche, *Lam Rim Teachings*.



samsaric developments and benefits is the root-guru. Another quotation is from the *Fifty verses of Guru devotion*:<sup>93</sup>

‘Powerful attainments follow from doing what your Guru likes.’  
This has been said by Buddha Vajradhara himself.  
Knowing this, try to please your Guru with all the actions  
of your body, speech and mind.

A sutra called *yönten rinchen düba*<sup>94</sup> says:

Good disciples should have a good guru devotional practice,  
because that is the source of all your qualities, all your paramitas.  
Your going-beyond will totally depend on that,  
your buddhahood will depend on that, your Dharma depends on that.

That was Buddha’s message and that is why we emphasize it here. For the same reason, a quotation from the [Heruka] Tantra *gyu dhomjung*:

As your field of accumulation of merit and purification,  
your vajra master is even more important than all buddhas.  
He is your ‘deity of deities’.

This is the traditional Indian way of speaking: king of kings, queen of queens, *etc.* So the vajra master is more important than the buddhas, the yidam, the deity, the dharma or whatever. The Mahamudra root text<sup>95</sup> says,

Just like a powerful fire quickly burns the wood and transforms it into dust,  
by a perfect condition with a perfect master  
all negativities can be burned and turned into dust within a second.

Look at Milarepa’s life. In the beginning he killed some odd thirty human beings. But finally meeting with the lama Marpa, including the building of several houses and a thirteen storey tower, he obtained total enlightenment and today we know him and call him the great Milarepa. That is all because of the guru-devotional practice.

There are a number of different stories like this in the lineage. Some of our people say, ‘I have to do a lot of work for Jewel Heart, so I don’t have so much time for practice.’ If you really understand what you are doing the work for, *i.e.* as a service to the guru, it is very beneficial and a real opportunity.

*Stories.* The first one is about the previous incarnation of Togden Rinpoche who was in Germany, the famous Daggyab Togden. When he and some others came to Ganden Monastery in Central Tibet, they were dressed up like beggars. While Sekong Dorjechang was giving an initiation and teaching in Ganden, some of those people sneaked in during the initiation, presuming Sekong Dorjechang would not notice. It was dark, just a few butterlamps were lit around the lama and on the altar and hundreds or maybe thousands of people were there. Sekong Dorjechang was at the point of giving offerings to the interferers, which is just before the initiation. All of a sudden he stopped and said, ‘I have a few people here who are unauthorized to stay here. If you leave by yourself it is okay, otherwise I’ll throw you out by this torna.’ So they all got scared and got up. Then he said, ‘Bearded guy over there, aren’t you going to sit down!’ And he made the gesture of throwing his vajra. He sat down, the others left, and that is where Togden Rinpoche started.

During his time of study in Drepung he got so confused. In Tibetan we have a word *mi-rtag-pa*, which means impermanent. But *mi* on itself means human being and *rtag-pa* permanent, so *mi rtag-pa* means: human being permanent. So he got completely confused. His colleagues didn’t help him, so he got more confused. He kept on debating with himself, but didn’t get it. He spent years on that, I was told. He would run to Pabongka to ask him, but the attendants didn’t let him in because he came in at funny times. But he was stubborn and picked up something to fight with and then Pabongka Rinpoche heard it and let him in

<sup>93</sup> Ashvaghosa, *Fifty Stanzas of Guru-Devotion* (Skt. *Gurupanchasika*), vs. 46. For the text see p. 357. With commentary: Tsongkhapa, *The Fulfillment of All Hopes*. Commentary of Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey see: Ninth Karmapa, *The Mahamudra, Eliminating the Darkness of Ignorance*, p. 141-170.

<sup>94</sup> Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 4 translates it: The Condensed Perfection of Wisdom Sutra

<sup>95</sup> Quotation not [yet] found.

sometimes. After that he would run back to Drepung, where the previous Lochö Rinpoche was his teacher. One day the previous Lochö Rinpoche said, ‘Do you really want to know about emptiness?’ ‘Yes’, he said, ‘but I’ve such a head-ache today, caused by permanent and impermanent mixed’. The previous Lochö Rinpoche asked the previous Togden Rinpoche for his begging bowl, pissed in there, and told him, ‘Drink this’. He said, ‘Yes Sir’, drank it immediately and that is where he got the break-through!’ That is what guru-devotion does.

In my personal case, when I first obtained a Vajrayogini initiation from Kyabje Lhatsun Rinpoche, during the second month of the Tibetan calendar, the end of the winter, I went there and asked whether I could attend it. Kyabje Rinpoche said, ‘Very good, come in and join me in taking the self-initiation’. I didn’t even have the initiation and said so. But he said, ‘Doesn’t matter, join me’. And during the initiation he made me help, like picking up the vase. When he was giving the vase initiation, I picked up the vase and it thundered, while it never did so in Tibet at that time of the year. He said,

If the lama delivers it, you can reach anywhere you want. As a fee have faith and respect.

This commentary concludes:

For all these reasons, one of the best ways to get benefit out of this precious life is to practice this guru-yoga. It is one of the best ways to practice, so follow this.

The guru is extremely important, not only in Vajrayana or Mahayana, but absolutely important in the Theravada tradition, too. In the Theravada tradition, without the teacher showing the way and guiding, I don’t think they have a practice; without an abbot or master, I don’t think they can take vows, not even the *upasaka* vow.<sup>96</sup> You do need a master. Even for refuge, you need a master who gives you refuge. So the importance of the master and guru-devotional practice is not only applicable to Vajrayana, it is in the Theravada teachings too; it is not Vajrayana baggage. I want to emphasize that.

Good commentaries that you can read are the Dalai Lama’s *Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, and Geshe Kelsang’s *Great Treasury of Merit*, which has titles put on the verses, which correspond with the outlines and say what each particular verse is for. That will be very helpful.

Before you do anything else, you have to generate a special virtuous mind, then take refuge, develop bodhi-mind, and meditate on the Four Immeasurables. Though these preliminaries are included within the *Lama Chöpa*, you should also do them before actually starting. Here we are not talking the preliminaries within the *Lama Chöpa*, but those before starting. When something is important, it will be repeated many times. That is how the traditional masters teach, repeating many times in different ways. We also have a saying:

When it is an important Dharma practice, saying it even one hundred thousand times is too few.

So, if we repeat a number of times don’t be impatient, but recognize that it is important.

*Preliminaries.* Before starting this practice, it is recommended to generate yourself in the form of the yidam, whether Guhyasamaja or Hevajra or Heruka or Yamantaka. You generate yourself in the form of a yidam and then follow the whole practice, such as generating light from your body and purifying all environments and inhabitants so that the world is transformed into a pure land, a pure mandala, and all inhabitants are transformed into goddesses and gods. (An alternative, perhaps simpler way to do this practice is to start as an ordinary being, and then generate oneself as the yidam at the point of dissolving the refuge field.)<sup>97</sup>

During the time I lived in India and looked after the Indian radio, I once interviewed Dilgo Kyentse Rinpoche in Delhi. I gave only a brief introduction and then, because I felt I had no qualities to interview him, asked him to speak. In this radio talk, he said, “All males are Avalokiteshvara, all females are Tara, all sounds are mantra; every word, even the wind blowing in the trees and whatever you hear, you hear as a mantra.” That is what pure vision is: all environments are pure and all inhabitants are pure beings; that is exactly what it is. Gelugpa lamas normally don’t say it, but you are supposed to visualize that way. What will be the result? Later on, it becomes actualized, and that is why a *sambhogakaya* has only pure retinue. So pure being, pure environment is very important.

<sup>96</sup> Lay vow; part of the pratimoksha vows, the vows for individual liberation.

<sup>97</sup> See page 65.

Even in Hinayana teachings is said: treat all beings like enlightened beings, think of them as enlightened beings, give them respect like enlightened beings. Hinayana is the earlier stage of practice and even at that level they emphasize that. Of course, in sutra level Mahayana as well as in Vajrayana, definitely you have to see everything in that way.

So, whatever appears to you, whatever you encounter, is all pure. Normally, with us, it goes in the opposite direction. Instead of looking at everybody as a pure being, we look at everybody as someone who is out to get us, as our enemy. When His Holiness came here and I was talking to him, he said, “People complain a lot.” I said, “Your Holiness, you can’t take every complaint as a true complaint; some people are just in a habit of complaining and some complaints are genuine.” He said, “Yes, I know, to some Western Dharma practitioners every appearance becomes their enemy, I am aware of that.” That is the direct opposite feeling of seeing things as pure. You have to respect everyone equally as enlightened beings. Like Kyentse Rinpoche said, all males are Avalokiteshvara, all females are Tara, all sound is mantra. That is the essence of Vajrayana practice.

*Summary of the Qualities.* In Lamrim you have the four basic qualities of the teaching, remember? 1) It enables you to understand all the teachings of the Buddha as non-contradictory to each other. 2) All the teachings have a special message for helping you, the individual, to obtain enlightenment. 3) Through it, you can understand the true intention of the Buddha’s message. 4) Because of that, all our faults will automatically discontinue within us.<sup>98</sup> All of these qualities are in here. In addition to that, you have here the qualities of the Vajrayana. In short, quickly, quickly attaining Buddhahood, within one lifetime, is the essence-quality that is in here.

### 3. The Actual Teachings

The actual teaching has three divisions: Who, Where, How. I am trying to make it simple.

#### Who Can Practice<sup>99</sup>

What are the necessary qualities for you to learn and practice this teaching? You must have had the common teachings already, common with Theravada and sutra level Mahayana, and, in addition, you must have obtained an initiation into the Vajrayana for one of the great *maha anu yoga tantra* yidams. That means you must have received the four initiations properly in one of these great mandalas of a yidam and you also have kept the commitments and vows intact.

In other words, you must have had basic Buddhist teachings, must have taken refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, must have a good understanding of and be influenced by the mind that seeks liberation, must be influenced by compassion, and must have taken initiation into a perfect mandala and kept the commitments and vows intact. Such a person is qualified. For people who have not taken initiation it might be a problem to do this practice. That is why we say that practitioners should have taken initiation. On the other hand, you cannot seal everything.

Keeping commitments and vows is very important. Normally, when we tell you that you can obtain enlightenment easily, this totally depends on keeping your vows intact. We often tell you that, as a Vajrayana practitioner, even if you are not doing anything, just lying down and sleeping and doing nothing, you will still obtain enlightenment, remember? This is the Vajrayana quality, but it depends on keeping your own commitment.

The moment I say ‘commitment’, people in the West think that I am referring to saying the *sadhanas*. That’s not the commitment. Actually that is some kind of voluntary work, although it has been made into a commitment by the lineage masters just to make sure people actually do practice. Apart from that, your real commitment is protecting the vows you have taken. If you do that, then, even if you just lie down, you will become enlightened, maybe not this lifetime, but within sixteen lifetimes it is guaranteed. That’s why it is so fortunate to meet with these teachings. If such a fortunate state is further helped along by a little work, you can produce enlightenment like an artist makes a piece of art by hand. So if you have the prerequisites and add guru-yoga as the backbone of all practices and on top of that do certain

<sup>98</sup> See Gehlek Rinpoche, *Lam Rim Teachings*, Ch. III.

<sup>99</sup> Also see page 238.

sadhanas and practices in the combination of mother and father tantras, you can produce enlightenment as easily as if you commissioned an artist to make some sculpture for you. There is a quotation from the Lamrim at the level of guru-yoga, which goes:

If you get teachings by the kindness of the guru, even if you think you are not going to be liberated, you will in fact be liberated.

There is also an example for that, which I can't remember. You find it in the *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*.<sup>100</sup> So it is very fortunate.

One of the commitments of the Vajrayana is that individuals should respect each other. Particularly between vajra master, vajra students, and the vajra brothers and sisters there should be profound respect. You express that respect by letting the senior vajra masters and students sit in the front. The junior ones should sit at the back. It is not right that whoever comes first should occupy the front row and leave the senior ones outside. That is not the Vajrayana way. If I don't mention it, it is not right. So right from the beginning this should be done, unless certain individuals, for whatever reason, choose to sit at the back. That is different. Otherwise, with the exception of the chanting leaders, *etc.*, one should let the senior people sit in front. There will be a time when the junior ones come up to the front. That is the way it works in the Vajrayana sangha.

It is the same in the Sutrayana sangha of monks and nuns, too. They count four levels of seniority according to how long they have been ordained.

In the Vajrayana system, at least in this sangha, we know who is senior and who not. It is not according to what your age is, or your color, but the time since you have entered into the Vajrayana teaching tradition. That is part of the Vajrayana commitment, too. It is a measure of respect for one another. Regarding this kind of respect, if you are looking for faults, you will always find them; if you are looking for qualities, you will always see them. However, you have to make sure that you don't go as far as becoming a Sir or Madam Positive. Apart from that, one should always look for the good qualities of the vajra master and sangha. That's how it works.

#### *How to Listen well*

Remember, there are three problems that can happen when you listen to teachings. The example for the first problem is when **the pot is filled up** and you can't pour anything else in. You can see it in the Chinese movies when a tea cup is full and they keep on pouring until all the tea overflows. If you have pre-fabricated ideas, it means your cup is already full. You expect to hear certain things and when you hear them, you like it, and when you don't hear them, you are disappointed. If you come with that state of mind, you don't have an open mind. Your cup is full; there is no room for anything to go in.

The second problem is when **the pot has a hole**. Either you just sit there and don't even listen or you may listen, but it goes in through the right ear and out through the left. You may write things down into your notebook or record them on your tape-recorder, but then never read the notes and never listen to the tape-recorder. That is the hole. There is no use in that.

Another problem is when **the pot is dirty**. When your cup is dirty, you cannot drink from it or use it. Even if you put lion's milk in it, you cannot drink it. That is the traditional example. It is toxic. Toxic here refers to spiritual toxins, things which harm us. What are these? They are doubt, disrespect, just pure curiosity and inquisitiveness, and looking only for faults. These are the real toxins. If you are only looking for faults you don't even have to sit here. You can find faults anywhere. If you are doubtful and suspicious, better not waste your time; it is not going to get you anywhere. You have to be intelligent and sharp-minded. You have to ask questions, but you should not have doubts in the sense of wondering whether it is really true that there is something called karma and is it really true that there is a Dharma, and so on.

<sup>100</sup> Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in Our Hands*, vol. II, p. 6; Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, p. 254. It is a quotation from Nagarjuna's *Panchakrama, Five Stages of the Perfection Stage*, to be found in Thurman, *Essential Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 251: Who falls from the summit of a high mountain / May think 'I mustn't fall!' but she will fall. Who obtains the helpful prophecy by the Mentor's kindness / May think 'I should not be delivered,' yet he will be delivered.

## Where to Practice

This refers mainly to a retreat situation. You should practice in a quiet place which suits you, where conditions provide for your health and physical and emotional needs, whether these are for a suitable friend, or information, or anything else. So wherever you have your requirements met, wherever you feel happy, wherever it is nice and quiet and beautiful, that is the place. It does not matter where it is, in the Midwest, or on the East Coast or West Coast, or Malaysia or Singapore.

Singapore is a one-city country. The whole country is one huge city. There are huge apartment blocks that really look like pigeonholes from a distance. However, if people feel happy and comfortable and can practice there, it is also a suitable place. It does not matter how big the city is or whether you live in huge monster-like concrete apartments or elsewhere. It totally depends on the individual. Some people like urban areas, some people like rural areas, and everybody likes change. When urban people come to rural areas, they think it is wonderful. And when rural people come to urban areas, they think that is wonderful. When people from India come here, if you take them to a nice, little, quiet place, they may be horrified, because they are probably looking for a city with big shopping areas. It is all relative. It depends on the needs and requirements of the individual. That's how you choose the place. So, not necessarily Michigan, but wherever you are. The quiet is necessary, but you can create that in the midst of downtown Manhattan. So, providing a suitable environment for yourself, wherever you are, is the where.

It is only when you are training in *zhi ne* or mental quiescence, that you need the recommended quiet and isolated places. You really have to have them then, otherwise this is very hard to develop *zhi ne*. Apart from that, your body is the mandala and your mind is Lama Hevajra, as Marpa has put it.

## How to Practice

That has two parts:

1. Session.
2. Interim

### 1. During the Actual Session

When I say 'session', I am referring to the time when you meditate, when you really do a guru-yoga retreat. You don't have to have a long-term retreat. Those who have the opportunity and the facilities, great. But you can do your *Lama Chöpa* retreat as twenty to forty minutes every day. Retreat means withdrawing from the lousy, noisy, usual daily chores, and retreating into the quiet, relaxed, happy, joyful atmosphere of your sweet home. The session itself has three parts: 1. Preliminary. 2. Actual. 3. Conclusion.<sup>101</sup>

### 2. Interim<sup>102</sup> – Between Formal Sessions

The time between sessions, called 'interim', is also extremely important. If you think that on retreat you can just sit there in your sessions and then, in between the sessions, you can go and watch television, you will find that it does not work. Really true. You can watch some television, it is okay, but if you watch some kind of funny movie, you will go back to your cushion and start thinking about it. You will wonder what John Wayne is doing! And then at night you will dream about John Wayne, too. That is not because you have watched too much John Wayne or are mentally connected with him. The protectors who look after you remind you, and give you signals reflecting your state of mind by means of wrathful or peaceful, angry or joyful dreams. All this is a mental reflection of yourself in the form of dreams. That's why I dream a lot of John Wayne sort of things.

The traditional teachings recommend that in between sessions you should read about the practice you are doing or read biographies of those who became enlightened through this practice and how they did it. In a way, the biographies of the early masters are the real sort of mentor for us. If you look from that angle, the translation 'mentor' for lama might not be bad.

<sup>101</sup> Preliminaries: chapter II, Actual: chapters III-VI and part of chapter VII; Conclusion: part of chapter VII.

<sup>102</sup> Is actually the very last outline of the teaching.



## II

# PRELIMINARIES OR PREREQUISITES

Within the preliminaries we have four parts:

1. Correcting one's motivation.
2. Refuge, generation of Bodhimind and practice of the Immeasurables, all together.
3. Purification of the environment and the inhabitants.
4. Blessing the offerings.

### 1. Correcting one's motivation<sup>103</sup>

#### a. Cleaning the Place

To generate your motivation properly, it is important to have a good atmosphere and for this you need a clean room. Tidying up your messy bedroom is your first preliminary practice. Please remember that, okay? If you have a messy bedroom, you don't even have the first preliminary. Did you hear me? No messy rooms, no layers and layers of clothes you have to walk over.

Cleaning is very important. You have to clean up the place where you meet your spiritual guide. This is actually one of the best purifications, better than saying one hundred thousand Vajrasattva mantras. If you keep your place absolutely filthy and keep on saying VAJRASATTVA SAMAYA MANUPALAYA with your mala, it is just laughable, and actually a clear indication that you have not understood the essence. The environment supports the inhabitants. Therefore, cleaning is absolutely important. If that is true for the external environment, it is also true for the internal environment of the practitioner.

Cleaning does not only mean cleaning the place where you meditate, but also cleansing yourself by washing or bathing. This is something Tibetans always emphasized in the teachings, though they only took a bath maybe once a year. The teachings always said to wash, but washing for them meant just throwing a little water on their faces and washing their hands, and because the rest did not get washed, you could see a line of dirt above their hands.

So, the practitioner should not be dirty and the environment should be clean. If that is not done, you fail the first practice. Forget about the rest. This is the real preliminary, the real *ngön dro*. It is not saying 100,000 Vajrasattva mantras, nor doing 100,000 prostrations, nor offering 100,000 mandalas, nor doing 100,000 of the guru-yoga practice, but cleaning yourself and your bedroom.

In this commentary by Tsültrim Nyima, the *Kachem Lung*, it says,

Buddha's special profound teaching is this. When he told Lam Chung, "Clear the dust, clear the dirt" Buddha gave a profound teaching. When the guy understood this, he said, 'It is not ordinary dust but the dust of attachment and hatred. The dirt is not just dirt, but the imprints of attachment and hatred on the mind'.

In the Hinayana level, the dust and dirt is the negativities and its effects to the individual, which means all five paths of the Hinayana are included in these few words.

In the Mahayana level, the dust refers to self-cherishing and self-grasping, both [and the dirt refers to imprints of that]. In other words, 'Clear the dust, clear the dirt' is a teaching of the whole path.

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<sup>103</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great treasury of Merit*, p. 45-47; Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 32-42.

When you talk about the two blocks to enlightenment the one is the delusion block, the ego and its effects and the other is the knowledge block.<sup>104</sup> By clearing both of them, the delusions and their imprints, the result is enlightenment.

In the Mahayana the direct obstacles are the self-cherishing and the self-grasping. The direct counterforce to self-grasping is the two emptinesses: emptiness based on I, and the emptiness on my. The emptiness based on 'I' is supposed to cut the negative emotions and the emptiness on 'my' cuts the imprints of those negative emotions.

The direct opposite of the self-cherishing is the bodhimind. In order to develop the bodhimind you have to develop great compassion. In order to develop compassion to others you have to develop compassion to yourself. The obstacle in developing compassion to ourselves is of two types: 1) we have strong attachment to samsara in general and 2) in particular we have attachment to the picnic spots of this life.

When I say this, some may think this is going too far and they may laugh at me, but in the Vinaya sutra it is clearly mentioned that because of these two lines, this guy obtained the five paths to himself and taught those five paths to others and many of them became arhats. And if you laugh at that, it is the clear sign that you know nothing.

For this practice you need the tools of motivation and awareness. For the motivation look at the bodhisattva Always Crying. Not only he cut his wrist, also five hundred others followed him in that. Take that as an example. Not only for own benefit but for the benefit of all others clear the dust and clear the dirt. That is a causal mind.

Motivation and awareness must be maintained together all the time, not matter where you clean. For example, when you clean the Center, you think, 'I am cleaning for the benefit of the teacher, the sangha members, of all beings, and for my own benefit. I clear my delusions, my imprints, my self-cherishing and self-grasping and its imprints.' Being aware of that when 'Clear the dust, clear the dirt' then becomes a powerful mantra. One more thing is mentioned here.

When you dig the ground, take walls down, or repair a building, avoid killing insects. You may not be able to avoid it completely but keep awareness and purify it. Cleaning means much more than cleaning, it means taking care of the environment. When you do work on building a house, an easy way to do is this practice. That is dharma practice; it has a tremendous effect. Think of *Lam Chung*.

*Always Crying.* Let me also tell you the story of the Bodhisattva *Always Crying*. His major job was to keep the areas clean where his teacher would come and teach. His teacher Chöpa was going to teach in some really dusty place. Always Crying [Tib. *Tadungo*] tried to get some water to keep the dust down but he could not find any liquid at all. Without any hesitation he then punctured his veins and used his blood to settle the dust. Don't look at it as dirty. Look at it from the point of view of how much devotion he had. Through this act he achieved what is normally impossible in the sutra path. In tantra everything is possible, but not in sutra. However, he managed to progress from the first Bodhisattva Stage [Skt. *bhumi*] through to the eighth in one go. That is how the guru-devotional practice works.

## **b. Preparing the Altar**

Your altar is a source of reliance and comfort. Buddha Shakyamuni picture, statue, or thangka is a must. Shakyamuni is not only a Buddha, but also the greatest teacher we ever had, and thus extremely important for us. Then, of course, Manjushri, Maitreya, Tsongkhapa, and your own root master are necessary images to represent the enlightened beings.

On the altar you also should have a representation of the teaching, like a *Prajnaparamita* text or some other book, and a representation of the Buddha mind, a stupa or a bell and vajra. So, you have representations of body, speech, and mind.

Then the practitioner should have a representation of the lineage tree.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Skt. *klesha-varana* and *jneyavarana* respectively.

<sup>105</sup> Rinpoche gives a present of a large poster of the *Lama Chöpa* tree to each student.



### c. Laying Out Offerings

Since you have an altar, you can't just leave it high and dry with some dirty clothes scattered around. That is not a proper offering! You should set out suitable offerings, such as water bowls, fruit, flowers, incense, music, and so on. Even a glass of water will do, but it must be properly cleaned and presented, not just put there on the altar after you drank from it. Don't think I am the only one telling you this. Hundreds and thousands of enlightened beings are watching you. They are not looking over your shoulder, but they are there, they see you. I am sure they are not watching when you are bathing yourself though! Don't worry about that.

The offerings should be nicely arranged. For the art of presentation, look at how the Japanese do it. They make an expensive dish called 'sushi' which is just some tiny little pieces of cut up fish with a bit of grated daikon radish. But, it is so beautifully and carefully arranged on a beautiful tray that it looks great and wonderful, and you don't mind paying for it.

If you are seeking help from enlightened beings, you can't just get some dirty cup and pour water into it, like a cow peeing. You must present it nicely. That will appeal to them and please them. They will happily accept it, not just feel obliged to take it but accept it joyfully. In this way you receive the benefit and that's how you build up your merit.

The *Kachem Lung* has a special way of presenting this. It emphasizes the motivation, 'I would like to establish a wonderful place where all lamas, yidams, buddhas, bodhisattvas and dharmapalas can come. And I would like to make wonderful offerings.' It also emphasizes a strong awareness of emptiness: in the nature of reality [everything] is free of inherent existence. And also have the usual recommendation of Samantabhadra offerings. Then it says,

If you make a water offering, but you think you are offering nectar, it is not a lie,  
because in a Madhyamaka text the story is told of three persons  
looking at a glass of water [and see it differently].

A god, a human and a hungry ghost perceive different things, and it *works* like different things! In emptiness everything is possible, you can imagine everything, however it has to work like it. You cannot take pebbles and say they are gold, because it won't function as gold. You may imagine whatever you want, but whether it is right or wrong depends on whether it serves the purpose or not. So here, a glass of water can function as a glass of nectar for those you offer it to. It is right on the basis of that Madhyamaka text. That does not mean you can just put dirty things up there and think that for them it doesn't matter. That won't work. The very thought that because of emptiness there is no good and bad, does not work. This is emphasized in this text; other commentaries don't mention it, but just presume it.

Whatever the offerings may be, they should not have any one of the five wrong livelihoods. The *Kachem Lung* quotes from Nagarjuna's *Ratnamala*.<sup>106</sup>

1. *False Pretence* [or *hypocrisy*]. In order to gain respect or trust from people or in order to receive gifts you pretend to be a good person, you try to impress them. We often do that, especially in the West. Remember the eight worldly dharmas. Remember Geshe Beng who cleaned up his place trying to impress his benefactor. But as soon as he sat down he realized he got into this trap. Immediately he stood up and threw the dust back all over the place and that way he threw the dust into the mouth of the eight worldly dharmas. We do this a lot so we have to be careful. On the other hand, thinking, 'If I behave terrible people will discuss with me, and then behave differently is not bad. Remember there are two self-respect, on the basis of self and on the basis of others, = consideration for others. But in both of those you try to be yourself.
2. *Flattery*. Motivation to gain something from the other by words, using words like 'How wonderful you are etc.' Anything you gain out of that is considered wrong livelihood.
3. *Indirect acquisition*. Seeking to get things from someone else, by saying how wonderful something is until the person says, 'Here you take it'.

<sup>106</sup> Probably the verses 413-415 of *The Precious Garland* are referred to: Hypocrisy is to control the senses for the sake of goods and respect. Flattery is to seek pleasant phrases for the sake of good and respect. Indirect acquisition is to praise the wealth of others as to win it. Artful acquisition is to deride others in order to acquire their goods. Desiring to add profit to profit / is to praise the previous acquisitions. Reciting faults is to repeat the mistakes made by others.

4. *Slander [or reciting faults]*. In order to gain a favor or gift from someone, you talk about the faults of the persons they don't like.

5. *Calculated generosity*. You want something big from the other one and you try to get it by giving the person something small. Or you say, 'What you gave me last year was so wonderful', in order to get something.

In offering, anyone of those material gains is not good. However, on a practical level a lot of people have things because of such reasons. If money is gained by wrong livelihood, it is not good to offer it, however it is better to offer it to the needy than to throw it away. This commentary says, 'That is why the earlier masters recommended to offer water.'

#### **d. Seat and Meditation Posture**

*The seat.* When you have presented the offerings nicely, you sit down facing the altar. It is not necessary for you to sit right in the middle of the room. If the space allows it, fine, but if not, you can sit on your bed or wherever you want to. When you are doing a formal retreat you have to do things a little differently. Then you must have a separate cushion and draw a swastika underneath. Not in order to remind yourself of Hitler! Long before Hitler, Indians and Tibetans used this symbol to represent power. Here it substitutes for the crossed vajra, the hand implement of enlightened beings; you don't want to sit on that. Sitting on a crossed vajra brings a lot of negativities. Even if you have a carpet with the design of a crossed vajra, don't sit on that carpet. Don't put that carpet on the floor. So you draw the swastika as substitute underneath the cushion. It serves as the sign of indestructibility. Actually there are two systems of drawing it, the Buddhist way and the Bön way: anti-clockwise is the Bön style and clockwise is the Dharma style. It must be originally from the Bönpo tradition, because they were there before the Buddhists.

The commentaries also tell you to put kusha grass underneath your cushion during a retreat. This is because kusha grass is used for purification; the Indians use kusha grass as a broom to sweep the floor. Also, its stems don't twist; each grass blade stands by itself. Indian Brahmins, specially Kasha Brahmins, like to be very clean, and not only in our Western understanding of being clean. They think that if any one of them touches something that is somehow a little bit unclean, something bad happens, especially if they touch lower-caste people, like the bathroom cleaners or people who work with leather. The Brahmins think that touching them or the place where they sleep or the utensils they eat from is terribly dirty. So if they have touched something 'unclean', they run away from their home to the kusha grass field, sleep there a whole night, and then think they are purified because of the kusha grass. That is traditional Indian culture. Here kusha grass is used as a good omen for keeping our mind clean and clear, because it is cleansing material and because the stems grow straight and do not twist.

You also should not allow your cushion to rot, so you raise it up a little bit, so it doesn't touch the ground. All these sorts of things are the traditional way of teaching. That doesn't mean you have to do all this everyday or have to have kusha grass under your bed. That is only if you are doing a formal retreat. If not, then your usual, nice, sweet, warm bed is good enough to sit down on, but make sure it is clean and tidy.

*The Meditation Posture.* How do you sit? In the sevenfold posture of Buddha Vairochana. When your physical part is transformed to become pure and perfect, out of the five Dhyani Buddhas it becomes Buddha Vairochana. (Some of you may not follow exactly what we are talking about here, but don't worry about it! The first time you hear it, you won't understand it, but don't worry. You should get the gist out of it.) Vairochana is considered the best physical way of being, therefore the way Vairochana sits is recommended.

Actually there are seven postures and Ensapa added one more,<sup>107</sup> so it became the eight postures of Vairochana. The way you sit is very simple. I learned it this way:

Legs, eyes, body, shoulders, head, tongue, teeth and breath  
are the eight features of the meditation posture.

The **legs** are crossed. You sit in the vajra style; in the West called the lotus posture. That means, the left leg is drawn in with the foot on the right thigh; the foot of the right leg is on the left thigh. Bringing

<sup>107</sup> The appropriate breathing. There are slight differences in numbering of the seven postures. Also see: Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in the Palm of Our Hands*, vol. I, p. 133. Dalai Lama, *Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 179.

awareness on that will have a great omen that the evil forces cannot harm you. So sit crossed legged as best you can. The **eyes** are slightly open, looking slightly down, straight from the nose. The *Kachem Lung* gives as reason: closing the eyes is the non-buddhist style; open eyes and looking straight up is bonpo style. The **body** is relaxed. About four inches below your navel, you put the right hand on top of the left, palms upwards, and touch the tips of the thumbs together. Joining the thumbs together making a triangular shape has the omen of making the tummo rise. The thumbs have a channel, [Skt. nadi] of compassion. Touching those two together and bringing heat it has the external omen of making the person more gentle and soft. The **shoulders** are straight and level. You align the vertebrae like a stack of coins and make the back straight, unless you have some problem with your back. If you do, then use whatever position is comfortable. The **head** is kept slightly down, so that you don't feel so proud. Pride is a problem. In the fields the empty grain stalks stand up straight. That tells you that the person has no good qualities, but is empty, except for a lot of pride. So hold the head tilted down a bit. **Tongue**, jaws and lips are relaxed; it is recommended that the tip of the tongue touch the back of the gum, so you won't get thirsty and you don't drool. There are also other reasons. The **teeth** are to be left in whatever position is comfortable. **Breathe** the air in and out through your nose. These are the ways in which you are recommended to sit.

The great Marpa Lotsawa, the founder of the Kagyu tradition, emphasized this way of meditating especially strongly. He used to say, "All other Tibetan meditators cannot even come close to my way of sitting." That is how Marpa used to brag about himself and put his contemporaries down.

This is the way of sitting and it is very important. Whenever your practice is combined with Vajrayana, the posture becomes important, and when you have a completion stage practice, then it becomes a necessary requirement. Until then, you can do whatever you want to. In the Lamrim period you hear about these postures, but are told to do whatever feels comfortable. When the completion stage is reached, you will hear that you *have* to sit that way.

### e. Watching the Mind

Now what about the energy or air? You can either do the nine-rounds breathing exercise or just let the breath flow normally and concentrate on the air coming in and going out. Either one of them will do.

*Nine-Rounds Breathing Practice.*<sup>108</sup> In this practice, basically, you breathe the air in through the right nostril and let it out from the left nostril, three times, then three times vice versa, and then three times in and out from both nostrils together, making nine rounds total. You all know that, so I don't have to go into detail. When you breathe out, you have to think that you are pushing all your obstacles, difficulties, delusions, negativities, faults, all of them, out of your system completely with the outbreath, whether from the right or the left nostril or both. When you breathe in, you take in the blessings of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, and they are absorbed and dissolve within you.

*Normal-breathing Practice.* If you decide to practice normal breathing, then, once your physical posture is set, before you start focusing on the breath, watch your mind, what sort of thoughts you are having, and what your mind is focusing on. You must remove anything that you think or know is not right, not fit for this practice, and anything that you think and feel is right, on the positive side, is okay. Tsongkhapa raised the question, 'What is the first thing you have to do when you meditate? Nobody answered that during his lifetime. Then later the First Panchen Lama replied and said, 'The first thing to do is to look in your mind.' You are looking whether your mind is in a dharmic nature or in a non-dharmic nature. Let's say it is in a non-dharmic nature. You may be caught thinking about crazy things, like what kind of kinky stuff you did last night; that is non-dharmic thinking. Or it could be anger, hatred or dissatisfaction. So you have to change that. That is the usual thing.

Further you should have a special virtuous mind. That is the bodhimind, thinking that for the benefit all sentient beings you would like to obtain the state of buddhahood and for that purpose you are going to do this practice.

<sup>108</sup> Literature: Geshe Rabten, *Treasury of Dharma*, p. 21-24; Lama Yeshe, *The Tantric Path of Purification*, p. 38-41; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light of Bliss*, p. 39-40.

If you have negative thoughts you have to deal with them, you've got to negotiate with yourself. The recommended negotiation is, "These terrible thoughts that come up in my mind for no reason or with reasons, are my problem." Don't think, "This is my problem, I'm terrible." No! Think, "This is my problem, this problem has created a lot of misery, a lot of difficulties for me for many lives. You, negativities, are the ones who are causing me the trouble, there you are, I caught you now, I need to kick you out of my system entirely. You have created troubles for me many lives, and this time I have a chance to end this; do you want me to waste that, too? Forget it! I'm going to kick you out of my system completely!"

Then you take a strong breath in and push your breath out from both nostrils and think that you are pushing out that terrible thought. You know, even when you are thinking of positive things, all of a sudden from nowhere you can get the strangest thoughts, very disturbing thoughts. Everybody experiences this, so, when you do, you push out not only the thoughts, but even the imprints and the root of all these thoughts, you push them completely out of your system.

We do have thoughts like that; everybody does. I want to share my personal experience. When I was young and small and learning, I had a special teacher who used to sit with me. All of a sudden a thought came to me, "If he dies, I'm really free." Yes, those thoughts come up, very often, from nowhere. Like that, from nowhere, terrible thoughts come up; it is human nature. If you don't have such thoughts, it is odd; if you do have such thoughts, there is nothing wrong, it is usual. So here you have to clear that, and this is how you do it.

You can't breathe out only, you have to take breath in. When you breathe in, just like before, you take in the blessings of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha from the ten directions. You can do this with strong efforts, with a breath that makes noise, or you can just do it the normal shallow way, or you can do it breathing in very slowly, whatever you want. It is recommended to do it seven times. The earlier one is nine rounds, this one is done seven times.

The whole point of doing these breathing practices is not just to observe your mind, but to give yourself time to bring about positive thoughts, such as feeling very fortunate to be able to do your practice. Your practice will enable you to become perfect, so you do not want to have any influence of negative thoughts. That's why it is recommended.

A number of times I mentioned to you that Je Rinpoche, Tsongkhapa, had asked the question, "What is the beginning of a meditation?" It was answered by the Panchen Lama hundreds of years later, who said that the beginning of meditation is watching your mind, not only to observe what's there, but, in case there are negative thoughts, negative influences, to clear them.

## **f. Correction of Thoughts**<sup>109</sup>

### *a. Preliminary Refuge Taking*

When all the negative thoughts are gone, and your mind is a little bit clear, then it is time for you to correct your thoughts. How to do this? By suggesting! You make suggestions to your mind. Just as Manjushri 'sold' three Yidams and three protectors and their practices to Tsongkhapa, you have to sell this to your mind, "For your benefit you need this and this, because this and this are your problems." You have to apply whatever is the best method to persuade your mind. If your mind is only going to buy from the right brain, then you work through the right brain, and if it's only going to buy from the left brain you work through the left brain. You do whatever you need to, but the message must be carried. The message you really suggest to your mind is:

### *Meditation on Refuge*

From the beginning I've experienced tremendous problems. I've come a long way with a lot of hardship, many difficulties. What really made me to go through all these constant, continuous sufferings and difficulties? Negative thoughts are what pushed me into all these difficulties.

<sup>109</sup> Literature: Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 32-58; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 45ff; Gehlek Rinpoche, *Ganden Lha Gyema*, Ch. II; Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in Our Hands*, vol. I, p. 136-165. Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, p. 152-179.

I don't know where I began. Even Buddha said there is no point where you can say you begin. I am getting nowhere and I am here now and I am not perfect. I've been running around experiencing problems all because of these negative thoughts. This time, by sheer luck, I have a wonderful human body, I have a practice, I have the wisdom to be able to make some difference. I'm capable, and I even have the opportunity to become a Buddha, if I work hard. This is a unique opportunity, which has somehow become available to me out of nowhere.

I have this opportunity now. I have the method, I have the capability, I have a guide, I have everything. If I don't help myself now, then again I will continue, constantly continue with the same old stuff. My life is not permanent, it is impermanent: death is definite; there is no certainty when is going to come; at the time of the death nothing but the Dharma can help. This is reality: death is definite, no certainty about the time of death, nothing but Dharma can help.

Even after death I won't disappear, I will continue to exist, and if I fall in the lower realms I will have tremendous pains of either hot or cold, hunger or thirst. Or I will be somebody's animal and be made to carry a load, like a donkey, having no freedom. That is the suffering of the animal realm. And I won't be intelligent. I'll have difficulties, yet I will not be able to express them. In such a condition, I won't even know that I can seek refuge and get protection. Even if I did know, I would not be able to find the object of refuge.

Let's say I take rebirth in one of the fortunate realms. Even then I'll have constant difficulties. If I become a human being, I will have the problem of birth, illness, aging, and dying. If I become a samsaric god, I will have the difficulties of that state. In short, no matter in which realm I take rebirth, I will be subject to delusions and karma. Totally under their control, I will have no freedom.

Like me, all the people I care about are in this same condition. And these people matter to me, we are related, connected. My very survival has depended on each and every one of them. Here I have the opportunity, not only to help myself, but also to help them, at the same time.

How can I help them? Not only am I myself in this suffering condition, but also all other beings are going through these different sufferings. How can I remove their suffering? How can I separate those beings from their pain?

You have to feel the pain in your heart. Think of them and try to bring the feeling of the pain within you, and then develop the wish to be able to separate them from their pain. You have to be careful, compassion without feeling is what Allen<sup>110</sup> calls a 'buzz word'. Be full of feeling. Bring the feelings in. That is how you meditate!

I really want to help. How can I help?

Don't put a full stop there! Saying, "Well, how can I help?" and putting a question mark and leaving it there, no way! That will be lip service, again. Therefore:

Feeling their pain, I really generate a strong wish to help. Even if I do not know how to do it, I am going to go out there and try to help all of those people and myself, myself and all of them. I am not going to sit idle. I am going to act! I want to do it, and I need to do it, I just can't sit idle, I have to do it!

In order to be able to do this, I need the best tools, the tools that enlightened beings have. I need those tools myself. Therefore, I want to become enlightened, so that I'll know how to help other beings and myself.

This is not only compassion, but compassion that has become bodhimind. You know all this from Lamrim. You know it thoroughly, so now you make it concise. And on every point where you have difficulties, use the analytical mind, your reasoning powers. Analyze the difficulties. Wherever you have problems, try to solve them. If you can't, talk to somebody: ask me or ask anybody around and try to get a correct answer. Try to solve the problems, and try to get a better understanding. Okay? At least, at the

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<sup>110</sup> Allen Ginsberg

very least you need a sort of imaginative, suggestive style. Then you may say: “I take refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, until I obtain enlightenment.”

If you could say this at the beginning of every practice, together with the above thoughts, it would be very good. Basically, this is what we mean when we say, “Correct your motivation.” Is that clear to everybody?

### *Visualizing the Common Refuge Tree*<sup>111</sup>

The Refuge Tree you have here, basically has a Buddha in the center. The complicated Refuge Tree is difficult, but I have to talk about it, because it is part of this teaching.<sup>112</sup> If it is too complicated for you to visualize, it doesn’t matter, a single Buddha will do. There is always both a detailed, profound way of practice and an easy and short way of doing things, so that is why even Buddha alone will do. Okay?

If you meditate and think this way every morning when you wake up and every evening before you go to bed, it will be very helpful to you. Though at the beginning you’ll have a little excitement and distraction, and after a little you may just have to slog through if you don’t feel like doing it, if you keep on doing it constantly day after day, it will make a difference and benefit you a lot. Think about it: a drop of water doesn’t amount to anything, but if you put a drop in a bucket every day, one day the bucket will be filled. Right? We all know that. Those who want to save money know: pennies make a nickel, nickels make a quarter, quarters make a dollar *etcetera*. If you just keep waiting for the millions to come, I don’t believe they will. Likewise here, if you’re waiting for a miracle to come, a spiritual miracle to change you, it is not going to, but, if you keep on building up from small bits, it is going to make a difference, your bucket is going to be filled. So put that effort in every day, that will be very helpful.

What do you visualize when you say, “I take refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha”? Visualize Buddha Shakyamuni right in front of you. He is Buddha, he is Guru, he is the founder of Buddhism. We are in Buddha Shakyamuni’s *tenyo*, *i.e.* we live in his official period, so, for us, he is the official representative of all enlightened beings. We represent all sentient beings.

The connecting point between enlightened beings and me is here now. This is the meeting ground between the enlightened beings, represented by Shakyamuni Buddha, and me, the unenlightened beings’ representative or ambassador; we meet here.

How you do it? It is not the picture you put up or the images you build. The point is to have a mental image in your mind. The mental image is your visualization. That is the object of refuge.

In front of you is a big throne, lifted by eight lions with a big, nice, respectable cushion on which you have a lotus seat, a moon disc, and a sun disc. Above that is your own root master inseparably one with Buddha Shakyamuni, in the form of Buddha Vajradhara. That is called Lama Tubwang Dorjechang.<sup>113</sup> He is the object of refuge, the real person,

Lama Tubwang Dorjechang is surrounded by the lineage-masters, Yidams, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, Dakas, Dakinis, Dharma-Protectors, all of them. They have the best thrones, the best seats you can provide. It doesn’t have to be an Oriental style of throne; if that is uncomfortable to you, imagine whatever is comfortable; it is your mind. If you want to imagine your Supreme Field of Merit or refuge-tree in the shape of a football field<sup>114</sup> and you’d like to place yourself on the ground in the middle, you are welcome. You can do that, if you feel comfortable with it; it doesn’t have to be an elaborate throne. Or, if you just want to put a reasonable love seat or a sofa, that is also fine. There are a lot of things relating to Indo-Tibetan culture in here, but cultural things are not necessary. So do whatever you feel comfortable with. Some people are very romantic and like to have an elaborate throne with real lions standing around; go ahead, doesn’t matter.

<sup>111</sup> This is called the common refuge tree. Literature: Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 42-44. For the uncommon refuge tree see p. 48.

<sup>112</sup> For a picture of the Refuge Tree see Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in Our Hands*, vol. I, p. 143.

<sup>113</sup> Lama: Guru: your root master; Tupwang: Shakyamuni; Dorjechang: Vajradhara.

<sup>114</sup> The common ways of visualizing a refuge-field or merit-field: the tree (Lama Chöpa practice), the circular assembly (Vajrayogini practice), the all-in-one (Jewel collection or Three-tiered being).

Lama Tubwang Dorjechang is surrounded by the lineage masters, Yidams, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, Dakas, Dakinis, Dharma-Protectors, and so forth.

If you can only focus on one, Lama Tubwang Dorjechang, fine, that is what you need to do. Or you may just focus and think they are there; that is also fine. And if you think, “This is the only one I have. You are the only one, I am going to hold onto you,” it is also fine. So, whatever system you feel comfortable with, use it. But an object of refuge is necessary, and that is the Buddha. Since we are eye-attuned, visually oriented people, and we can’t literally see the Dharma. Therefore:

Dharma is visualized in book form. Whatever teachings are given appear as books: in the nature of light, radiating single-colored or rainbow-multi-colored light.

Visualize whatever light you feel comfortable with. Some people feel more comfortable with dull or muted colors, some people like bright and shiny colors. The Dharma appears in whatever form you want.

The whole field of refuge looks happy. They are happy, enjoying themselves, smiling at you, ‘not knowing what time it is.’

You have to see them in that way. Don’t imagine them as unhappy, as impatient, as tired and not wanting to sit there any longer. Each one of these phrases has a meaning; for example when you are really happy, you don’t even know what time it is. If you visualize in this manner, it is a great omen. Visualizing Lama Tubwang Dorjechang looking at his watch won’t do any good! You also have to imagine them looking at you with kindness, very compassionately and very relaxed.

You yourself are looking at them, remembering their kindness, compassion and quality.

Remembering their kindness, the compassion shown to me, and their good qualities, will bring a profound faith, not blind faith, but intelligent faith. Faith that has reasons behind comes from two causes: remembering their kindness, and admiring their quality and closeness.

Within that feeling of joyful, intelligent faith, visualize yourself as the leader of all sentient beings. All space, all the heavens if you like, is filled up with the objects of refuge and all the ground is filled up with refuge-seekers, non-enlightened beings. Think:

We are here now to seek something. We want to draw your attention, to evoke your kindness and compassion. That’s why we are here.

If we don’t have protection, we may fall into the lower realms. We have had countless meaningless, useless lives, one after another, with lots of difficulties and problems, always struggling to survive. That is the nature of samsara, a constant struggle for survival. It is all we can do. “Hang on, hold on,” is what we normally say, we can’t do anything beyond that. And if we can’t hang on, we may even fall into worse and we don’t want that.

Remember: the cause of refuge is fear or a sense of urgency. Fear is a problem and fear is necessary. If you are not afraid of falling in the lower realms, it doesn’t matter. If you are not afraid of dying, jump into the fire, it doesn’t matter. People do sometimes jump into fires! But as an intelligent person, you don’t want to do that.

I am afraid, for myself and others, of falling into the lower realms. So we are all seeking the protection of the Three Jewels, of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. We don’t have anything else. Not only do we seek protection for this moment, but from now on, until we reach enlightenment. From the bottom of my heart I seek protection till I become a Buddha, till I no longer need protection.

With this sort of motivation, you say one of the refuge prayers a number of times. Those who are saying one hundred thousand refuge formulas are recommended to do some repetitions here. Go slowly and thoughtfully, not fast, and focus on Lama Tubwang Dorjechang.

*Namo Gurubhye, Namu Buddhaya, Namu Dharmaya, Namu Sanghaya (.....x)*

or:

*I take refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, until I obtain enlightenment.*

From Lama Tubwang Dorjechang and the surrounding deities, the lineage-masters and so on, from their bodies five-colored nectar flows. It comes to me and all sentient beings, both to our

bodies and to our minds. It purifies all negativities we have committed from the limitless beginning, especially the negativities that we have created on the basis of the Guru, such as threatening the body, not following advice, upsetting the Guru, not having profound respect, insulting, *etc., etc.*

All negativities generated on the basis of the master, are completely washed out of my system. From all the doors, from all the body's sense organs, they are washed out completely; inside, outside, in between skin and flesh, everywhere.

They have been totally washed away now, and my body has become the nature of light, pure, clean, and clear. My life, my longevity, my luck, my quality of spiritual development and knowledge, all of them have developed.

Especially, the blessings of body, mind and speech of the Spiritual Masters have entered the bodies and the mindstreams of me and all non-enlightened beings. I and all sentient beings are now under the protection of the Great Master.

Likewise you take refuge in the Dharma. When you do that, the light comes from those light-nature books.

When you take refuge in the Sangha, the light comes again from the body of the object of refuge.

At the end of that you think:

From now until I no longer need refuge, I will not let them go. I will not abandon these objects of refuge until I no longer need them, that means until I obtain enlightenment.

That is how you take refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. That basically covers the preliminary refuge. Later we come to the major refuge.<sup>115</sup>

#### *b. Preliminary Generation of Bodhimind*

*By practicing generosity and the other perfections,  
May I be able to obtain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.*

By the power of every action that I do, by acting generously or meditating on generosity, observing morality or meditating on it, being patient or meditating on patience, being enthusiastic and mindful or meditating on trying to be mindful, applying wisdom or meditating on wisdom, and by the power of all other positive deeds I have ever done, may I obtain enlightenment.

This is **wishing** bodhimind. Here you need both wishing bodhimind and action bodhimind, so:

Praying 'May I obtain enlightenment', is good, but I am not going to be satisfied with this, I am going to work, I am going to make it happen! I am going to act specifically for this purpose, I am going to put more efforts in, and I am going to do it!

Thus committing yourself to do it, taking a sort of vow or promise, is **action** bodhimind.

Because I have generated both wishing bodhimind and action bodhimind, Buddha Vajradhara becomes very happy, so happy that a duplicate comes from his body and dissolves into me. And, just by that dissolving, I become Lama Buddha Vajradhara.

When that happens, you have to develop divine pride:

I am the Lama Buddha Vajradhara.

Do meditate, concentrate, hold that pride.

#### *Meditation on Emptying Samsara*

Just being proud alone will not help. As you are doing that, you as this very Lama Buddha Vajradhara generate light from your body, and purify all negativities and obstacles of sentient beings in general. In particular, the light goes to the hell realms. For the hot hell realms, the light

<sup>115</sup> Page 48.



from your body is of the nature of cool air and water, and just the touch of that air-and-water light cools and soothes all the hell beings. The suffering of the hot hells becomes comfortable and people there now experience a joyful place. Similarly, you go to the cold hell realm. Now the light becomes heat, you warm them and relieve their suffering from cold.

Then, go to the realm of the hungry ghosts; give them food or drink, whatever they need to relieve their major suffering, which is hunger and thirst. Give them relief.

Then the light goes to the animal realm, even to the darkness at the bottom of the ocean. You give them light, particularly light that can clear the ignorance within their minds. Free them from all their suffering, including the sufferings they experience being used by human beings.

Likewise, the light goes to the human realm and the realms of the samsaric gods and demi-gods; it goes to all types of beings and relieves their sufferings.

You are not done yet. You continue to generate light that shines from the peak to the bottom of samsara, and purifies completely the negativities of all beings everywhere. Your light changes them, so that their minds become *Dharmakaya*, their bodies become a Vajradhara body. And the tips of the light rays purify all the environment, the water, the mountains, the earth, the trees. Everything, everywhere is pure.

Having done this, you watch yourself once again:

Whatever I wanted to do in the beginning I was able to do. I purified all the environment and liberated all sentient beings. Keep that thought and be happy for a while, thinking that you have joyfully accomplished this. Also, focus on the pure environment, the pure beings, on yourself in the form of Lama Buddha Vajradhara, on divine pride, all of them together. Maintain this focus for a little while.

This is one of the very important meditations or visualizations that you can practice here. In traditions other than the Gelugpa, this sometimes is referred to as *ko wa tun dug* or *rig du ne jung*<sup>116</sup>, which means that all six realms have been purified. It is also referred to as ‘emptying samsara’. Here we do this joined with the *Lama Chöpa*.

This is still a preliminary practice before starting the *Lama Chöpa*. We simply do this practice as we say the refuge prayer. How beautiful this practice is! This is why I keep on saying how very lucky and fortunate we are. And this is only a preliminary practice, wait till the actual practice begins tomorrow! There is much more! I am not joking, really!

Think about what you have learned. And from now, on when you say, “I take refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha....,” you can use what I just taught you. Make what you have learned into a practice and by practicing it try to actualize it. When it actualizes, all males become Avalokiteshvara and all females become Tara. That is how it works. So, do kindly try to do it that way. From now on, whenever we say *Sanggye chödang*....., I hope you will remember, meditate, and visualize what we talked about. That is what we call training.

You have to train yourself so that when you say the words, the corresponding thoughts come up in the mind. That is really practice. If you just keep on saying the words without thinking about it, that is a problem. If you don’t know what to think about, that’s a problem too, but you can’t help it. Now you know what to think here, so use it, and join the thoughts to the words. At first, you may not be able to bring it all together at once, but if you keep on doing it you’ll get used to it. As Dharmakirti said, “Once you are trained, it is very easy.” That is why the earlier Tibetan teachers were able to go through the whole Lamrim, from guru-devotion up to the total enlightenment level, while mounting their horse. Between putting their foot in the stirrup and jumping on the horse, they could go through the whole meditation. That takes training. When you are trained, you can do all of this; when you are not trained it takes a long time.

<sup>116</sup> Of both the Tibetan phrases the spelling is not yet found

I'd like to share a very funny story I remember from the time when I was a kid in Tibet. At that time there was no other transportation besides horses. I was taught that when riding you should say your prayers. There is a long Tara prayer at the end of which you say, "This concludes bowing down to the twenty-one Taras," and there you have to get off the horse as an indication that you have finished. Some youngsters forgot to pray, so when they got off their horse they had nothing to say, and they were about to be beaten. Then one of them said, "Oh, I forgot, just a minute," and he climbed back on the horse and did his prayer. That is how we got trained. The funny thing is we got a lot of beatings when we were kids, but there was not much damage emotionally; maybe it is the blessings of the Buddhadharma.

### *c. Preliminary Four Immeasurables*

Our usual, normal interest and focus is whether something is going to protect or harm our ego. We set up two completely separate categories or camps. We look in our own camp and develop attachment and we look to the other side and label them as enemy. This is all because of protecting our ego-, which is so important for us! That is why it is so easy for anger to come up, for hatred to come up, for jealousy to come up, for attachment to come up.

People argue even over a simple political issue to the point that when one cannot convince the other, both get angry, and sometimes even refuse to talk to each other. And that is still not as bad as physical assaults or shooting. That happens, too! Doctors have been shot by pro-life people as an anti-abortion action. It goes to that extent. I am not saying a political issue is necessarily an ego issue, but once an individual involves himself in it with arguments, he can quickly get angry. When anything comes close to *me* and *my* issue, it becomes even more intense.

This is how delusions come up. Because of delusions, we do all sorts of unfortunate things. So this is the real source of all negative karma, how it comes about. If you think about it carefully, it is always like this. You get angry when someone disagrees with you over things that you cherish and over-value. That is how it happens, especially when it is close to *me* and *my* family, and when comes close to *me myself*, oh dear!

Because of this habitual behavior pattern we have, we automatically create negativities. This is the cause of our endless, life after life continuation. By my negative actions I not only harm myself, but I take others down with me, and they help me to bring me down; we 'help' each other in this manner. And that is how we create negativities, the real cause. If you pin yourself to that ego, cling to it, cherish it, it is the culprit. That self-cherishing is not outside; it is inside, it is within me. It is not me, it is within me, part of my thoughts. How I conduct myself, how I gear my thoughts, my attitude, that is the real cause for all my misery. Therefore, if I could relax and loosen my hold on it a little bit, there could be great changes.

We find that we can't relax because of the ego fight going on. That is the total reason why people get nervous, tense, are unable to sleep or sleep too much, eat too much or starve themselves. The struggle inside is the main thing. Especially when you start to pay attention through practicing the Dharma, you begin to see it, you begin to understand it and you can begin to make a difference to your life. A big fight, that's what it is! So, you bring the Four Immeasurables in.

Well, if we didn't have so much fighting and struggling to protect our egos, if we could be all equal, free of that struggle, how wonderful it would be! How wonderful it would be if all people, all beings, could remain free of that struggle. I pray it will happen and I will ensure that all will remain in this state of **equanimity**.

Mind you, this equanimity is not lukewarm or emotionless indifference, but real, warm, positive equanimity, filled with love and affection.

Likewise, may all sentient beings remain in a state of **joy**. How wonderful it would be if they could be in that state. I will act to make sure they will remain so. May I be blessed to be able to do that.

Each one of the four immeasurables has a focal point, aspects of the mind and feelings that should arise within the individual. So, focal point, aspects and feeling. If you don't have the feeling, it is just an empty 'buzz word'.

Equanimity should begin with feeling that terrible struggle within oneself. We all have this struggle to defend and protect ourselves all the time, it is simply a matter of acknowledging it. That feeling of be-

ing afraid or uncomfortable is the first half of the feeling that brings equanimity. And when we say, “If we were free of that, how wonderful it would be,” the other part of the feeling, the joy, comes in.

So practice with feeling. Say the words, meditate, visualize, and do not forget feelings! That is why I introduced here the combination of focal point, aspects of the mind, and the feeling within. If you leave feelings out, or don’t pay attention to them, then you are in trouble. We all do that very often. Earlier teachers took it for granted that their students would feel and recognize their feelings, but we have a problem of recognizing them. Feelings are there, we only have to acknowledge them, identify, recognize, shake hands with them and next time we see them, we know what they are. The problem is, we don’t meet them. They come, they overtake us and our minds are gone somewhere else. When we come back to ourselves we realize we lost our home. A terrifying tornado went through it and when we return to our senses we have to pick up the pieces! That is what we are doing. We don’t recognize! Recognize, shake hands, look carefully at each one and even smile at it. So when that feeling comes in next time, you’ll be prepared!

We don’t have much of a problem with **happiness**. When we are happy we know how we feel. We simply say:

May all beings be happy. Recognize that and be happy with that.

Then **compassion**! People like compassion because they look at it somehow as very a romantic thing, but actually it is feeling the pain of others. The **focus** is beings; the **aspect** is the wish to help, the **feeling** is feeling the pain that they experience. That means you are connected, in touch; otherwise you are disconnected, you are out of touch! How much pain you feel? For example, think of a dog run over by a car lying on the roadside, the lower part of its body smashed, crying with pain. When you see that, how much do you feel? Think of a person you know in that situation, or your own pet instead of a stray; then the feeling becomes much more intense, much greater. Now imagine a friend, a family member, or you yourself hurt like that and see how the feeling of pain inside increases. That is the actual feeling of compassion.

If you don’t feel that pinch, then how much compassion do you have? It is only wonderful lip service, a beautifully decorated smile. I don’t think it works that way. But you don’t have to be over-emotional about compassion, either. Even when you feel the pain, don’t cry all the time. That is being over-emotional, not knowing how to balance. After rousing the feeling, imagine a state where all sentient beings are free of all suffering and full of joy, and rejoice that state. Say, think, and pray:

If all beings remain free from pain forever, how wonderful will that be.

I pray they will remain in the joy that doesn’t know pain.

I will work for it, I’ll make sure that it will happen. May I be blessed to be able to do that.

At this, light and liquid (in rainbow colors if you want) come from the body of the object of refuge, reach all sentient beings, including me, and purify all our negativities in general and particularly the negativities which block us from meditating on and actualizing the Four Immeasurables.

Think that they have been fully purified, that they are completely gone out of your system.

In the usual methods of purification, the light and liquid comes from the top down and from the bottom up, and so forth. The most powerful, most effective and most important method is the sunshine method. As earlier teachers from Kham, the eastern part of Tibet, used to say, “When the sun rises from the eastern mountain, all the darkness goes away.”

Light comes from the body of the supreme field of refuge and just by the power of that light all the darkness disappears, all negativities are gone.

You don’t know where the darkness has gone, but it is not there anymore. It was there during the night, but when the sun rises from the east it is gone. So light and liquid come from the body of the supreme field of refuge and just because of that light all negativities disappear. This ‘sunshine’ method is considered more powerful here.

Because of this, all our bodies become of light nature, clean and clear like crystal. Our longevity, fortune, luck, spiritual development, knowledge and all other qualities have been fully built up. And especially I and all beings will remain in the great Four Immeasurables state.

*From a strong positive state...* In short, after cleaning the place and preparing the altar, the first and foremost preparation for meditation is watching the mind. That means observing whether it is in a positive or negative state. A dog has one responsibility, to look after its own tail. The one responsibility of practitioners is to watch their mind. So tune in and watch what you are thinking. Find out what is going on. If your mind is functioning in a positive way, fine. If it is negative, get rid of the negativity.

How? By breathing out all the negative thoughts and influences. If you are angry, upset, emotionally down, if you are too high emotionally or on chemicals, whatever it is, breathe it out. If you are too low, chemically or emotionally, breathe it out. Breathe the air out, imagining whatever color you don't like, for example in the color of American coffee, the dirty laundry water.

Then when you breathe in, breathe in the blessings of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, of Lama Tsongkhapa, of Lama Tubwang Dorjechang. When you do that, after a little while you will be able to give your mind a good 'kick' of positivity. You know, when you drink you get a kick, right? The same for people who smoke, they get a kick and the people who smoke marihuana, too. Here you get a virtuous 'kick'. Once you feel that kick, it will make your mind soak in and absorb positive thoughts. That positive state is meant when it says:

*Rab kar ge sem chen pö ngang nyi nay....*

st. 2. **With a radiant, pure mind,...**

*Ngang* is the real kick. Translators say, "Within the sphere of emptiness, within the bliss or joy..." but the real truth is this kick, the positive, virtuous kick. Looking at the Tibetan, you get a much better understanding. *Rab* is great, *kar* is white, which means pure. White represents virtue in our tradition. Remember that fresh white yogurt-like cloud. It is the white, fresh virtuous thought within that. *Ge* is positive; *sem* is mind, so *ge sem* means positive thought. *Chenpo* is big, great. *Ngang* is difficult to explain, it is more or less 'within the sphere of'. You know, in the word *dharmadhatu*, the *dharmakaya* type of ultimate level, *dhatu* means 'within the feeling of' or 'where things are brought together'. This word gives you that feeling. So this line means: 'within the sphere of that great virtuous, pure thought'.

Now the question arises: What thought are you referring to? What is that great virtuous or positive thought? Within the sphere that I like to remain in, what is the feeling, the attitude? We have been talking about taking refuge to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, about generating bodhimind, and about the Four Immeasurables. The combination of that feeling is what they are referring to in this first line. You are told here what should be the mental attitude of the practitioner at this level. So you are saying that you are in that mental state and from that mental state, again, refuge is taken.

(If you don't remember what was said, ask others, read your notes, listen again to the tapes available and do not expect you'll become an expert within a week. If you keep on looking and listening you'll get more and more. If you listen to it thirty times more and you read it thirty times more, you'll have sixty different ways of understanding it better and better.)

You need is a very special positive mind, free of negative emotions. When negative emotions have been cleared through the practice of breathing them out and building up the blessings of enlightenment, that feeling you get, that kick, is the perfect motivation. That is the first outline heading of the preliminary practices. When we talk about motivation at this point we don't mean seeking enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. Here it is: within the sphere of that great mind. Or you can say 'within the perfect pure mind'. Whatever way you translate it, it is very important that one's mind should enter a very profound state. Once you have done that, you have the meaning of the first line of the *Lama Chöpa*. Literally it means, 'Within the great mind of a positive virtuous kick.'

So, *with a radiant, pure mind* tells you how to tune yourself in for this practice. If you don't tune yourself in and just keep saying the words you will fulfill the commitment, but you are not going to get much benefit. If you don't feel much effect, you won't see the point of what you are doing, so you will get fed up after a little while. The best thing is to try to get yourself tuned in at the start. Even if you can't think much after that, you should get at least that nice little wonderful feeling in the beginning. The first line of the *Lama Chöpa* gives you that generation of the pure mind.

## 2. Refuge, Generation of Bodhimind, Four Immeasurables<sup>117</sup>

### Going for Refuge

Before you take refuge you need an object of refuge. You have set up your altar, but an altar is only an altar, it should represent something. If you have pictures or statues, they mean something to you, however this is mind training, not eye training. Therefore it is also good to have a visualized Refuge Tree here. There are two systems.

- a. Buddha Shakyamuni in the center of the tree as principal, surrounded by Lamas, Yidams, Dakinis, etc. That is the *common* refuge tree. It is a good way and recommended. I taught it before.<sup>118</sup>
- b. Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang as principal. This means the Lama in Tsongkhapa's form with Buddha Shakyamuni at his heart and Buddha Vajradhara at Shakyamuni's heart. That is the extraordinary or *uncommon* Refuge Tree I'm going to use now.

### Visualizing the Uncommon Refuge Tree

Right in front of you is a great throne lifted by eight lions. On top is a lotus cushion.

When you think about the lotus cushion, don't think of a lotus which has been chopped off and is as flat as a CD. It is a live lotus, one that is still attached to the stump. It also does not just have two or three leaves, but a lot of them, and in the middle of them the beautiful lotus. It is so big that even a single lotus is covering almost the whole throne. It is important to have it open and big, luxurious and very rich, no limitations, abundant. It should not have too many leaves and flowers, but they should be huge and multi-colored.

In the center of that appear sun and moon cushions, and above that is the Buddhas of past, present and future in the form of your own root master, in appearance a full-fledged Buddhist bikshu [with the look of Je Tsongkhapa]. That is Lama Tsongkhapa with the three beings: commitment being, wisdom being and concentration being.

He is expressing his kindness and love for all sentient beings by giving a nice, big, good smile. He has one face, two hands. His right hand is in the gesture of teaching, the left in the gesture of the meditative state; the begging bowl filled up with nectar. He is also wearing a yellow pundit hat, the color of refined gold. His legs are in the vajra posture. (The Americans call it the 'lotus posture').

At his heart level is again a lotus and moon seat. On top of that is Buddha Shakyamuni who has the ushnisha on the head and wears monk robes.

At his heart you have Buddha Vajradhara, blue, one face, two hands, holding bell and vajra, with his consort Vajradhatu Ishvari<sup>119</sup>, fully decorated and ornamented. The joy of union of Buddha Vajradhara and consort is not only fulfilling the concentration being, but also the wisdom being and the commitment being. In other words, all three of them are very happy, fully satisfied.

One of our major suffering is dissatisfaction with whatever it may be. Everything is dissatisfying. That is why it is very important to think that these beings are fully satisfied. All three of them have all the qualities of the thirty-two major and eighty minor marks. These are the commitment-, the wisdom- and the concentration being. This is not the generation of the Lama Chöpa tree. It is the refuge tree at this point.

All of them are sitting in a rainbow tent – or environment or palace.

When we say 'palace', we think straight away that it should look like the Chinese emperor's house. That is the culture we have. Even the Tibetan Buddhist mandalas have these yellow roofs. That is the influence of the Chinese culture. It is interesting. Buddhism comes from India. The elaborate decorations are coming from the Chinese culture. Then they were also used in Tibet. They adopted and adjusted each other. When you talk about the mandala, you can have the original Indian square one or the Chinese, with all the dangling things and a yellow Chinese roof on the top, with bells ringing and so on.

<sup>117</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 47-62; Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 42-52, 54-58.

<sup>118</sup> See page 41.

<sup>119</sup> In Tibetan: Buddha Dorjechang and the consort Dorje Yingchugma.

One of the most difficult things we have to do is to adjust to the culture. In the traditional Buddhist countries like Tibet, China, India or Japan all these things are culturally accepted. But for us in the West it is completely brand new. It is very difficult for many people. The cultural adjustment has not been taking place. With cultural adjustment, instead of the yellow Chinese dynasty-style building we should be thinking of a huge Wall-Street type of sky scraper like the Chrysler building or the Empire State building or the World Trade Center. These are cultural adjustments. We could have thought of the White House in there too! This is how the culture comes in. The Tibetans think of the Potala as one of the eight wonders of the world. But if you look at it, although it is a Tibetan building, it is a Chinese design. Of course, if you say it is Chinese, the Tibetans will not like it. But in reality it is. The cultural setting is also important. It helps people to visualize. We can certainly think of the mandala with an Indian design. You have to keep the tantric shapes like square, or double triangle, and so on. You can't change that. But within that you can build the Chrysler Building, Empire State Building, *etc.*

Here, in our current visualization, however, it is not the time to think about whether it is the Forbidden City or the White House. Here it is the rainbow tent.

At the heart of Buddha Vajradhara you have the blue letter HUM. From that, light comes out, goes to the right and at the tip of that light there is Maitreya Buddha, surrounded by the masters of the vast lineage. That is at the right hand side [of Lama Tsongkhapa].

Then light goes out to the left, and there is Manjushri, surrounded by the lineage masters of the profound teachings.

Then the light goes upward, and there are – in a column above Tsongkhapa's head – all the lineage masters of this practice, including the First Panchen Lama, Ensapa, Tsongkhapa, *etc.*, up to Buddha Vajradhara. They are all in the form of Manjushri, except Buddha Vajradhara at the top. This represents the lineage of Mahamudra teachings and they are all in the form of Manjushri because he represents wisdom.

In front is your root master surrounded by the Lamas you have taken teachings from.

At the back the practice lineage which is Atisha surrounded by the Kadampa teachers.

So, this description of the five groups of gurus is sort of a miniature refuge tree.

The gurus are again surrounded by the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and also by the Yidams. In the East is Guhyasamaja, in the South, Yamantaka, in the West is Heruka and in the North, Hevajra. They are surrounded by all the Yidams of the Maha anu yoga tantras. Outside of that are the yidams of the yoga tantras. Outside of that those of the charya tantras. Outside that are the yidams of the kriya tantras. Outside of that are all the Buddhas, and also their teachings in the form of books next to them. Outside of that, you have all the Bodhisattvas like Maitreya and Manjushri and others (Although you have already visualized Maitreya and Manjushri earlier, you can have them here too); the Bodhisattvas are the Sangha of the Mahayana. Outside of that, you have the Arhats; they are the Sangha of the Theravadayana. Outside of that are the Dakas and Dakinis of the twenty-four pure places; these are the Vajrayana sangha. Then you have the Dharma protectors – non-samsaric Dharma protectors.

Samsaric Dharma protectors should not be included. It will come a little later, but it is very important.

All the peaceful ones get moon cushions and the wrathful ones get sun cushions. Each one of these objects of refuge will have a letter HUM at the heart, AH at the throat, OM at the forehead.

Light goes out from the letter HUM at their heart levels. Whoever you have meditated, their light goes, brings their wisdom beings and dissolves them to them. In other words, the wisdom beings are invited and dissolve to the commitment beings, as you have meditated. Each one of them becomes a perfect object of refuge.

The teachings themselves are represented in the form of books. There are rules about how to visualize this. If there are more than four books, you put them on a bookshelf, if there are less than four, you don't. Books represent spiritual development, because teachers pass on their experience by what they teach and that is written down in books. In this way the books symbolize Dharma. Real Dharma is spiritual devel-

opment, not the external books, nor the teachings which you sit in and listen to. Only spiritual development is actual Dharma. (That should be enough. If I go into too much detail, it won't work. )

*Simple Refuge visualization.* If you can't visualize all this, then you generate your own root master in the form of Tsongkhapa, at his heart his real essence is Buddha Shakyamuni, and that Buddha himself is inseparable from Buddha Vajradhara. So in reality there is Buddha Vajradhara. From him arises the manifestation of Buddha Shakyamuni, from him another manifestation of your root master, in the physical form of Tsongkhapa, which makes it easy for everybody to meditate and follow the tradition. You can think about and see it as either going deeper into the person or coming out of the inner depths of the person. Then you just think he is surrounded by all objects of refuge. That will also do.

I have presented the refuge field in a little more elaborate way. Normally we just talk about one single guru inseparable from the Buddha. In Vajrayogini, if you remember, there are also three different levels of refuge. One is with all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the second one is with the sixty-two deities of Heruka and then the third one is only one single object. So you are not stuck with one. You don't have to do all of this every time you do the *Lama Chöpa*. You can use either of those methods, depending on how much time you have. This is for your information, your practice. You have to know which one to do, according to your time and ability. Sometimes you can do the shorter one, sometimes the longer one. If I never talk about the longer one, you will not get it. So at some stage I had to mention it. This is the object of refuge.

... *dhah dang kha nyam ma gen sem chen nam*  
*deng ne ji si chang chup nying pö bar*  
*lama kön choh sum la kyap su dro.*

st. 2. ... **I and all beings**

**From now until we reach the heart of enlightenment**  
**Take refuge in the Lama and Three Precious Jewels.**

In your visualization you also have yourself and all sentient beings who need help. You are the important one, you are the one who is doing the work. You are the active person. All sentient beings are surrounding you. Since this is done from a Vajrayana orientation, you not only have all sentient beings around you, but they are also in pure form. They are free of ordinary perception and conception.

I and all sentient beings are seeking protection from the fear of samsara and nirvana.

Mark my words! From samsara *and* nirvana. Samsara has the fear that we can get stuck with suffering. Nirvana has the fear of dullness and idleness. From the viewpoint of Theravada, samsara should be negated. From the Mahayana viewpoint both, samsara and nirvana, should be negated. One should be active with the bodhimind. Vajrayana is part of Mahayana, so here we have the fear of not only the samsara, but also the nirvana as well.

You are looking at these elaborate objects of refuge. In reality they are the manifestation of Lama Buddha Vajradhara. You think, 'You are the only object of refuge that I can rely on.' With that profound mind, with that focused and concentrated mind, we go for refuge.

This verse started with *With a radiant, pure mind...* In other words, everything from the top down has become pure, including the elaborate pure offerings. Within that purity, that radiance, you take refuge. You know, a pure mind itself is not good enough. That mind should also be effective for oneself and others. That is why it is a radiant, pure mind. The word in Tibetan is actually 'very white, pure white'. We are talking here about a special mental state. It is also a pure mind, free of all neuroses and negativities. Along with me there are all sentient beings, equal to the limits of space. Wherever there is space, there are sentient beings. Now we take refuge. *From now until we reach the heart of enlightenment.* We do it until we reach the heart or the mind of the enlightened beings, the all-knowing mind, the enlightened mind. Until we have achieved that, we *take refuge in the Lama and the three Precious Jewels*. So we take refuge in the Guru, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. This is how the words of the root text go.

Very often I get the following question: First we generate ourselves in the form of Yamantaka and then generate the refuge field in front of us. Next we are saying that we on behalf of all sentient beings take refuge. How come Yamantaka is taking refuge? Actually if you do it in that order<sup>120</sup>, you do generate yourself in form of Yamantaka first. However, at the point of taking refuge you are not thinking of yourself as Yamantaka. You are not focusing on the point of being Yamantaka. The focal point over here is the refuge. You are shifting the focal point of yourself as Yamantaka to the elaborate refuge tree and then you take refuge. This question has been asked by the Tibetans too and I have heard Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche and Kyabje Ling Rinpoche say that at this point you are just not thinking of yourself as Yamantaka. Since it is imagination and assumption at this point, switching back and forth is not a big problem for us. Also, here it is not the sadhana period, where in the development stage you are building everything on top of what you have visualized. Here it is different.

Also, in case there is confusion, as a preliminary to the *Lama Chöpa* we already have taken refuge and generated the bodhimind. However, here we do it again. We do it twice. Sometimes it is even done three times, once before starting with the actual practice and then, within the *Lama Chöpa* itself, you do it twice. There are a lot of repetitions.

*I and all beings* who have been my mother at one time or another....” A lot of people think, ‘This is not about me, but about others’. This is a mistake and is getting close to idiot compassion. *Dhah*<sup>121</sup> in Tibetan is ‘me’ and then you have all the others. So don’t leave the ‘me’ out. I emphasize this point, because many people with some little American understanding of compassion and dedication for the benefit of others ignore themselves a lot and that is not right. If you don’t do it, who will? This is a very important point. You have responsibilities. If you want to escape them, fine, go ahead. But if you want to take responsibility, the ‘I’ counts a lot, not to increase your pride, but to make yourself responsible. You are the leader, the one responsible. You should not feel pride but make yourself feel responsible, by thinking:

I am the one responsible, so I have got to do it. I am here to represent everybody, all the sentient beings that surround me. I am here to take refuge from now until I obtain enlightenment.

‘I and all mother sentient beings as extensive as the space or sky,’ How many sentient beings are there? Nobody knows the number; it is as vast as space. Who are these people? They are not strangers to me, they are my closest friends, my nearest and dearest, those who gave me life, the ones who cared for me. The tradition refers to them as a mother, since mothers gave us the biggest gift we’ve ever received, life, precious life. Of course the fathers have contributed, but actually the mother gave you life. Also our total survival depended on our mother. That’s why when any difficulties come, beings run to their mother! That goes for animals, insects, human beings; everybody does that. If some of you now look at your actual mother and try to say “All sentient beings are kind and compassionate like my mother,” you won’t be able to do it because you think your mother was terrible. However, the point is, if you are a mother, and many of you are, how do you feel towards your kids? You watch them and see. Don’t think, “What did my mother do to me?” but think instead, “As a mother what would I do for my kids?” It is really the same thing. With the exception of a few crazy ones, mothers care for their children and so do you if you are a mother.

*Ma gyur* or *ma gen*. *Ma* is mother; *gyur* is ‘one who has been’, or ‘one who is’, or ‘one who will be’. We had a number of different lives, countless! And each and every time we had a mother. We have had countless different mothers in countless different lives. Everyone has been in that position as our mother, so we don’t have to worry about who is or is not my mother. The change of lives makes the difference.

‘From now until we reach the essence of enlightenment.’ What is the essence of enlightenment? Ultimate development that has two aspects. One is that all obstacles and their imprints are totally cleared. When you have cleared everything you have reached the ultimate level of clearing, the ultimate level of achievement. By clearing that, you achieve the ultimate development. It is like a seesaw: when the obstacles go down, the development comes up. That is what is meant by essence of enlightenment. These two aspects are what make the enlightenment work.

So until that is achieved, one goes for refuge. The objects of refuge are the Guru and the Three Jewels. The translator does not need to put in the word ‘precious’. Refuge taking means that you rely on

<sup>120</sup> That is, if you’ve started the practice at verse one.

<sup>121</sup> Often transcribed ‘dag’ or ‘dak’.



the objects of refuge whatever conditions may be, whether what you experience is good and enjoyable, or whether it is miserable, difficult, suffering. That is the essence of going for refuge.

We are not going for refuge to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha just to have a comfortable life. You have to remember that in our normal usual human mind we think that refuge is seeking protection from suffering, illnesses, and things like that. But that is not the meaning of Buddhist refuge, particularly not of Mahayana refuge and not at all of Vajrayana refuge. Vajrayana refuge has gone beyond that level and accepts, “Whatever it might be, good or bad, happy or sad, joyful or miserable, I will rely on them. I made up my mind and I will stick to it.”

We don’t go wherever the wind blows. A flag follows the direction of the wind; if the wind blows from the west, the flag will turn towards the east and make a lot of noise and if the wind changes direction, the flag will follow. That is not the way Vajrayana refuge works. It is solid, stable, grounded. Whenever I say that people are not grounded, I mean changing according to the wind.

So, *I and all beings* is about the people who are relevant to me because at one time or another I have depended on them for my very survival. These people are the sentient beings I am talking about, not strangers. Therefore:

I and all of us, from now on till we don’t need the protection of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha anymore, take refuge in the Guru, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

**NAMO GURUBHYA!**

**NAMO BUDDHAYA!**

**NAMO DHARMAYA!**

**NAMO SANGHAYA! (3x)**

*Namo Gurubhye.* The traditional teachings will add up here: *Pal den la ma dam pa nam la kyap su chio.* That means you are taking refuge to all the great masters. The short version of that is *lama la kyap su chio.* The word *kyap* is one who protects. The word *su* really means ‘pointing to’. You are saying, ‘to the one who protects, I go for help’. That is basically the explanation for *namo*. The word *Guru* means *lama*. That is short for *la na me ba* – ‘there is nothing better’. The word *guru* itself is made up out of *gu na* which means ‘quality’ and *ru*, which means ‘heavy’. So it means ‘heavy with qualities’. There is no one who could really be a better object of refuge. There is no other person who has such qualities.

If you have time you can say this as many times as you want. In Vajrayana you always include the NAMO GURUBHYA. You can say that about twenty-one times if you want, but you don’t have to every time. In Theravadin refuge it is okay to leave it out, but in Vajrayana you always have the four rounds of refuge.

*How to visualize all beings.* In your visualization you are there as the director, managing the affairs of all the sentient beings, with the responsibility of taking refuge in the Guru. So you are calling the Guru. When you are generating all sentient beings in front of you, your father and all male relatives will be at your right hand side. The mother and all female relatives will be at the left. In front of you are your enemies, the ghosts and those harming you. All others are surrounding you. That’s how you generate, however, there is no set rule, so whatever is the simplest way to do it, I believe you can use that method.

*Causes of refuge.* The manager or executive director here has responsibilities. One of these is to take refuge for all these people you are managing. For this purpose you need two causes:

1. The **fear** that you and all others might fall into the lower realms. You need the sense of urgency that you all need protection. You really want to see to it that no one falls into the lower realms. This sense of urgency, thinking, “How can I protect everyone?” is referred to in the traditional teachings as fear of falling into the lower realms. Actually it is not exactly fear. It is not fear in the sense that somebody is coming to hit you on the head or that you are going to lose something. It is rather being concerned that you may lose one of the people you are responsible for. You need this sense of urgency.

2. The total **reliance** on Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, knowing that they can protect everyone, that they have the capacity to protect. This knowledge actually comes as the result of wisdom practice, and you have to build up to that. As long as you don’t have it, you can substitute a little bit of believing. If you don’t yet have total understanding and wisdom, you can generate a little bit of belief that Buddha, Dharma and Sangha can do it. That will do, but the right thing is when you really know it. Knowledge is

different from believing. Believing is when you are told something, you have to believe it, and if you don't, you go to hell. That's not the way. You have to know it yourself. If you think and analyze enough, you will come to know it. (All this is in the Lamrim teachings which everybody here knows, so I don't have to talk much about it.) But if you don't have time to think, if you haven't had a chance to analyze, and you need to take refuge, then you simply must rely on Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

Since you are the manager here need the causes of taking refuge on behalf of all beings. You are the executive director. Generating the causes of taking refuge and developing reliance is your job as manager. If you don't do it, it is missing. It is your responsibility.

Those of you who want to do a lot of refuge mantras, can say 100,000 of each. Some people asked me, "Are you recommending that we say one hundred thousand refuges?" Those of you who want to do it, wonderful! I encourage you to do it, but it is not a commitment and I am not saying you should do it or you must do it. But it is nice.

If you have the time, keep on saying *Namo Gurubhye* and focus on all the Gurus. You don't have to sing; as you keep on saying it and focusing on the Gurus, light and liquid come, purifying all negativities. You can visualize that all negativities leave your system through all the orifices. However, the most powerful method here and recommended for this particular practice is to visualize sunshine eliminating the dark.

#### *Visualization Refuge: Receiving Blessings*

You focus on all the Gurus: *Namo Gurubhye* (..x)

Tremendous light comes out from the body of the gurus. This light is in reality bliss-void inseparable wisdom nature, appearing as light.

It comes to me and reaches to all sentient beings, enters into our body and mind streams and purifies all negativities created from beginningless time in general, and particularly those negativities that have been committed in relation to my guru-devotional practice, such as insulting and challenging my guru, not following his or her advice, making him or her mad, giving him or her a hard time. All of those particular negativities at this level, as well as any broken commitments of body, speech and mind, all of them have been completely corrected and purified, have become perfect and my body and mind becomes pure light nature and wonderful. You can visualize that fire-like light rays burn the obstacles away like blow torches burn feathers.

This means that any negativities of body, speech, and mind you created, by physically harming, not following the instructions, or irritating your Guru, are purified. The most important negativity is not having proper devotion or acting in an insulting manner. This comes from anger. Though it may not really be insulting from your heart of hearts, the way you act may become insulting. So, think:

Now all the negativities created on the basis of the Guru have been completely washed away, my body has become light-natured.

Blessings are received. All good qualities, both, spiritual development and knowledge have increased. Also all needs are provided. I've received the protection of the Three Jewels

*Namo Buddhaya*. The same process goes for Buddha. Insulting Buddha is belittling him, thinking, "Who is this guy anyway?" Also we accumulate negativities by like selling an antique Buddha image and buying a fur coat with the profit. I am giving you an extreme example. And then the sadhanas. Either the sadhanas have not been said clearly, or the mantras have not been said completely or have been said incorrectly or the numbers have not been said completely. We all have these faults. You are not the only one, we all do that. Here is an opportunity to purify all of them.

Your focal point shifts from the Guru to the Yidams and Buddhas: *Namo Buddhaya* (..x)

Light comes from their bodies, reaches to yourself and all sentient beings, enters into your body and mind streams and purifies the negativities in general and in particular unclear meditation, half-said sadhanas, broken mantras.

All the bodies of the Buddhas are sending light and liquid, purifying the faults of insulting Buddha, the desire to destroy him, selling of Buddha images for profit.

All these negativities are purified and we all come under the protection of the Buddha.

*Namo Dharmaya*. Insulting Dharma is deliberately refusing to believe what is obviously true, or giving up Dharma in the sense of saying, “Theravada Dharma is not very good, Mahayana is very good, Vajrayana is bad,” anything of that sort.

Now you say: *Namo Dharmaya* (..x)

Light and liquid comes from the Dharma books held by the Buddhas, representing their spiritual development, their message and their expression. All our negativities in general are purified and particularly making one’s living by selling Dharma books. [We come under the protection of the Dharma].

It is not good to sell Dharma books for profit. In fact, it is a big negativity. If it is done to help the Sangha, maybe it is okay, but not if done for an individual’s sake. This may sound very strange. A lot of people have to make their living by selling books, but the motivation should be to provide good information. That is okay. Selling Dharma books for profit breaks the commitment to the Dharma. There is this story of a teacher who was saying to Manjushri or Tara or somebody, “I would like to obtain enlightenment and go to the pure land and I would like to bring my attendant with me, too!” Tara replied, “No, you can’t. He sold this Prajnaparamita text book, and used the money he received for personal purposes, so he will go to hell, unless he does a lot of purification.” The teacher asked, “What can I do to prevent that?” and she advised him to do certain purifications. It’s a long story but I just wanted to mention that. It is different if your goal is to provide Dharma information for others. We had a long period in Jewel Heart where we did not sell any books or images for this reason. Finally, people told me that I was not providing opportunities for students, that I was not giving them any information, so then it changed. Selling Dharma books for profit is probably a wrong thing, even if it is done as a service. In Jewel Heart we are doing it as a service and the little money that comes from it doesn’t go to any individual at all but to the collective sangha community activities. That is how I try to justify that. It is an important point and one has to pay attention.

Another thing which we should try to avoid is jumping over Dharma texts or leave Dharma texts lying around on the floor and so on without some cloth or little table underneath. That is considered to be a negativity. The ritual objects are in the same category. You can’t leave them on the ground and then jump over them. If you can provide some kind of place to put them on, you should. Some of us pack all our Dharma things into one little backpack and then we throw that around or jump over it or walk over it. Traditionally, the rule was very strict. Every written word was supposed to be treated like that. Nowadays this is impossible for us. Newspapers and magazines are everywhere. It is difficult to avoid that fault completely. But still, we should be at least aware of it and not jump over books without any reason. There is also a rule not to put images on top of books. When I was a kid, I had an altar and all the books were above the altar rather than underneath.

*Namo Sanghaya*

Now your focus shifts to the Arhats, the Sangha of Sutrayana, the Bodhisattvas, the Sangha of Mahayana and the Dakas and Dakinis, the Sangha of Vajrayana.

The number is not that important, but the visualization is. The focus is very important. If you can focus very well on each one of those, then do it. It is very beneficial.

As the leader, you make the request to the objects of refuge. Say: *Namo Sanghaya* (..x)

From their bodies light and liquid comes, reaches to the mind streams of ourselves and other sentient beings, purifying all negativities in general and particularly those committed against the sangha, especially creating a schism within the sangha.

Insulting the Sangha is criticizing others and creating divisions for reasons of self-protection and self-promotion. When you want to present yourself in a favorable way and be praised, if you don’t get what you want, the next thing you do is create divisiveness. People here do that very often. It is the competitive Western mind. In the East we didn’t have such a big problem with this in the past, but

maybe now we do as well. But Westerners have that. They do it automatically, just because they want to be right, because they want to get what they want. That is actually a crime against the Sangha, one of the heaviest non-virtues. Another non-virtue in this context is to criticize other sanghas and also to criticize those in the sangha who have vows. Diverting donations from the sangha is also a negativity.

Not acknowledging positive actions by others is another negativity against the Sangha. When somebody gives something, some donation or some help, we'll probably say, "That is very good, but it would be better to do something else." This diversion from giving credit to good actions is another heavy negativity against the Sangha. Another one is saying negative things about the Sangha. It is one thing to criticize an individual, but there is a tendency to go and generalize, 'this Sangha', or 'these people'. We do like to shift blame onto others. If we say, "They did it," we may succeed in some face-saving, but we actually create a lot of negativity, particularly if the people are part of our Sangha, since this is a direct crime against the Sangha.

Now all the negativities created against the sangha are completely purified. Along with this, all our bodies, our flesh and bones, everything impure has been purified. Our body becomes pure and light natured. Our internal spiritual development and the development of our knowledge, all of that has been generated and from now on we are under the protection of the sangha.

Here, with saying *Namo Gurubhye, Namoh Buddhaya, etc.* we are not only purifying our negativities, but also all obstacles to our practice of Dharma, our physical illnesses, our mental unhappiness, all our internal and external problems. In one way it is washed, but in another way the light coming from the objects of refuge is like fire, very powerful and strong, like a blowtorch. All our obstacles are burned, like a blowtorch incinerating a feather. Whatever we need for our practice has been generated, established and provided. In other words, the clearing of obstacles itself provides the necessary things.

### Special Generation of Bodhimind

*ma sem chen kün gyi dhön gyi chir  
dhah nyi la ma lhar gyur ne  
sem chen tham chay la ma lha-i  
go phang choh la gö par ja.*

- st. 3. **To benefit all beings  
I will become a Lama-Yidam and lead all beings  
To a Lama-Yidam's supreme enlightenment.**

You still have the elaborate refuge tree in front of you. In the center of that is your root guru. From him a duplicate comes and dissolves to you.

By dissolving the root guru to yourself, in order to benefit yourself and all sentient beings, you become bliss-void inseparable nature of wisdom, which becomes the physical appearance of the Lama Yidam – Yamantaka or whatever yidam you may be.

So even if during the refuge taking period, while you are not in yidam form yet, here you change into the yidam form. [In case you started with verse one, then] although you are in Yamantaka form yourself, you become bliss-void, which again becomes the physical appearance of the Lama Yidam.

Within that form, at your heart level, the relative bodhimind, which is the true bodhimind, now becomes a moon disc. The absolute bodhimind, the wisdom nature of the bodhimind, now becomes a blue HUM<sup>122</sup>, standing above that moon disc.

Light radiates from that letter HUNG, purifies all environments and all inhabitants. They are transformed and become the Lama Yidam. Impure things, environment and inhabitants become pure and that is what I am. That is how I will become a Lama Yidam.

You have to think that this direct-result level has actually happened. You also need to develop the pride of being the Lama Yidam at that level. You have to think more in the present tense than in the future tense.

<sup>122</sup> The pronunciation is HUNG; the writing is HUM: consisting of: the body of the HA, the U underneath that turns HA into HU, and the cirkel or zero that represents the MA, which is referring to emptiness. For a drawing in Tibetan and in Roman script, see p. 116.

So, this verse is about the special development of bodhimind. Bodhimind has two-prongs: 1. Interest of all other beings. 2. Self-interest. Self-interest is important. You can only do it yourself. So there is the mind of total dedication and of making oneself responsible. In Tibetan the mind of total dedication is *ma sem chen kün gyi dön gyi chir* ‘for the sake of all mother sentient beings’. The rest of the verse is the second prong, making yourself responsible: ‘I shall become the Guru Yidam and lead sentient beings to that state’.

Actually, it the same as what we said earlier about bodhimind<sup>123</sup> and compassion. I don’t think we really can do better than that. Bring those thoughts in here, make use of them again. Repeating a number of times is very helpful. Actually, the special Mahayana refuge is very similar to the generation of compassion and bodhimind. They are difficult to differentiate, because Mahayana-refuge *should* already have the influence of great compassion and bodhimind in it.

### The Four Immeasurables<sup>124</sup>

*ma sem chan tham chay kyi dhön du dhah gi*  
*tshe dhi nyi la nyur wa nyur war dhö may sang gyay*  
*la ma lha-i go phang ngön dhu jay*

st. 4. **For the sake of all beings**  
**I shall quickly, quickly, in this very life**  
**Become a Lama-Yidam, Primordial Buddha.**

. In Tibetan it says ‘quickly, quickly’. The double ‘quickly’ is put there for a reason. It means the attainment of Buddhahood will be doubly quick. The first ‘*quick*’ indicates that, if you follow Tsongkhapa’s tradition of teaching, you follow a teaching which is quicker in results than any other. The second ‘*quick*’ tells you that not only are you using this special tradition, but within this teaching you are using guru-yoga as the basis or backbone of all practices. This makes it even quicker than quick. It is like a springboard which makes you jump a lot higher. If this would be translated as ‘as quickly as possible’, it misses the message. The meaning is different.

Bodhisattvas are not supposed to seek anything for personal reasons nothing, not even the state of Buddhahood, not even in a dream. That is the bodhisattva’s commitment of ‘selfishlessness’ or selflessness: to seek nothing for oneself, even not the state of a Buddha, not even in a dream. You have this heavy responsibility: you need to help and if you don’t have the tools, you won’t know what to do. So you need knowledge, you need capability, and you need power, for others, not for yourself. That is how the bodhimind works. That also *nyur war nyur war*, double quickly.

Another explanation at this point is this. The first time ‘quick’ means that you can obtain enlightenment within this lifetime. The second ‘quick’ means that you can obtain it within the short period of three years and three months.

In this verse it says that you will attain the state of *dömei sanggye*, that is the primordial Buddha. What does that mean? I need to give you a little explanation on this. It does not mean that we have been Buddha before. A lot of people say that by nature we are all fully enlightened beings. I don’t think that is right. We are not. If that were the case, we would not be here. Besides, once you are enlightened, you stay enlightened, you don’t fall back. If you have been enlightened once and become enlightened a second time, what guarantee do you have that you will not go back again?

Primordial Buddha means original or first Buddha. First means here that to become enlightened is the first priority. It is the primordial requirement to become enlightened. Does that make sense in English? We should have been enlightened, but we are not. So it is our first priority to become enlightened.

It is interesting: the word *dö mei* is by nature already meaning ‘enlightened’, so *dömei sanggye* means it is almost like an inherently existing enlightened state. Of course, there is no inherent existence, but the word primordial or *dö mei* will give you the idea of an inherent Buddha. You know why? Who

<sup>123</sup> See page 44.

<sup>124</sup> These verses are also called engaging Bodhimind, and then the previous verse is called wishing Bodhimind. Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 57, 59.

knows when the first Buddha came in? There is no beginning, nothing to point to and say, “This is the first Buddha among all the Buddhas.” You can’t find that out, just as you can’t say, “This is my first life.” That is why they use the word primordial. There is not a time where there is no Buddha, at every time and every part of space there is a Buddha. What here is translated as primordial is very hard to explain. It is almost like inherent existence, because you can’t point out where is the beginning, so you can almost say that in your own nature there is some kind of ‘Buddha-thing’.

The last line of the verse says that what I am going to obtain now is the Lama Buddha stage or the Lama Yidam stage or Lama Deity stage. Why? Because I want to separate all sentient beings from their sufferings and put them in that Lama Buddha state. To achieve this I would like to do this practice, which is called the yoga of *la ma lha* or yoga of Guru Yidam or Guru Buddha. Buddha is *sang gye*, Yidam is *lha*.

*ma sem chen tham che duk ngel le drel*  
*de chen sang gye kyi sa la gö par cha*  
*de yi chir du lam zap mo la ma lhai*  
*nel jor nyam su lang war gyio.*

st. 5. **I shall liberate all beings from suffering  
 And lead them to the Great Bliss of Buddhahood.  
 Therefore I practice the profound path  
 Of the yoga of the Lama Yidam.**

Here we have the immeasurable **compassion** that wants to free all beings from their suffering. It says, “I shall free all mother sentient beings from their sufferings and lead them to the blissful Buddha state.” Actually, Buddhahood is a state of joy, because you have achieved your goal, you have managed very well, that is why it is a joy without equivalent. So here you have immeasurable **joy**. Not only that, if they become Buddha, they will be free from the extremes of closeness and distance, so the **equanimity** is there. What better wish could you have than to bring all sentient beings to the blissful level of becoming Buddhas? What better love can there be than giving them ultimate joy? That is the immeasurable **love**. In this way we have all the four immeasurables contained in this verse.

*Equanimity*<sup>125</sup>. I am just going to say a few things about equanimity here. The first equanimity is to be free from nearness and distance. This refers to being free from attachment and hatred. We are looking at the sentient beings who suffer from attachment. We have a number of us that do suffer from that. There is no shortage of examples. There is also no shortage of people who are suffering from hatred. So you are saying,

These people are suffering from this pain, because they have no equanimity. They are either overpowered by attachment or by hatred. How wonderful it would be if they were free of attachment or hatred!’ That is the *wishing* level of equanimity.

You can increase that a little bit. Now you think, ‘I not only wish that they be free, but that they remain free. I pray for that. So you are praying and *acting*, not just wishing.

The next level is the *commitment*. You say, ‘I will see to it that this becomes so.’

Then you say, ‘May I be blessed to be able to do that.’ You make a very strong, urgent supplication to the refuge field. You have to make a heartfelt request.

Because of that, light and liquid come from the refuge tree – in nature uncontaminated wisdom, in appearance light that clarifies all obstacles – and purifies all the negativities. This light enters into the body and mind streams of myself and all sentient beings, purifies the negativities collected from beginningless time and particularly develops the understanding of the Immeasurables. Our body becomes pure light nature, clean and clear. All sentient beings are purified of their hatred and attachment and everybody remains in great equanimity.

So even within that one layer of equanimity you can have these three stages. You can use the same methodology for the other three Immeasurables.. If you want you can also insert an extra verse for the four immeasurables, like

<sup>125</sup> A detailed explanation on equanimity/equality: Gehlek Rimpoche, *Lojong: training of the mind in seven points*, point 2.

May all beings free from suffering and its causes.  
 May they remain in happiness and its causes.  
 May they have joy and its causes.  
 May they never be separated from equanimity and its causes.

According to this verse you think that ‘not only will I obtain that Lama Yidam inseparable state, but I am also going to lead all sentient beings to that level.’ That is sort of the lifeline of the practice, the Lama Yidam inseparable yoga. Panchen Lozang Chögyen has really emphasized that here. You create a very strong motivation at this point. You are declaring your mission, your purpose. In other words, the reason why are you doing all this is to free all sentient beings from their suffering and bring them to the level of the Great Bliss of the Buddha. This way it not only becomes the *praying form* of the bodhimind development but also the *action form*.



### Watching the Mind and Correction of Thoughts – a few notes from the *Kachem Lung*

The *Kachem Lung* mentions two interesting thoughts here.

When the Buddha was about to obtain enlightenment he sat on the kusha grass and made up his mind, ‘Until I obtain enlightenment I am not going to move from here, no matter what happens.’ Then the evil forces came, but Buddha did not get up. That should be our motivation. Our awareness should be, ‘I am going to sit on this cushion until I completely destroy the forces of self-cherishing and self-grasping, *i.e.* the ego.

*Forcefully cutting.* Then he mentions here the usual nine-round breathing meditation. Plus something else: forceful cutting. You may find it mentioned here and there, but normally you don’t get the details. The commentary says,

When you watch your mind and your mind is not on the right track, is going towards attachment or hatred and especially looking for your everyday livelihood, when you see this self-cherishing or self-grasping you say, ‘Hey, you who made me miserable, life after life. I see you are still not satisfied, lingering here. Today I have the upper hand over you. I’m going to throw you out. I will never again let my mind be controlled by you, not even a tenth of a second. I call on the buddhas and bodhisattvas to help me. May I be blessed.

You breathe strongly and deeply in from both nostrils. Then let it go out strongly and completely from both nostrils. The moment the breath goes out you think you have thrown out the self-cherishing or self-grasping. When you breathe in, you think you breathe in the blessings of the buddhas. So you replace the self-cherishing by blessings.

Then check your mind again. What is it focusing on? If it focuses on faith or desire for enlightenment, be happy and just continue breathing normally, slowly and softly, without any sound – three, seven or twenty-one times.

What you try to get out of this is some kind of pure mind, free from negative thoughts.

In the mahamudra they tell you about the clean, clear type of primordial mind. That is what this method aims at. The idea is not to have your thoughts presenting a point to meditate on, but to let the mind that is not influenced by thoughts, read the message you are presenting, see the points you are giving.

This is something phantastic that is talked about here. It is not generating a thought, it is going beyond that, cutting through the thoughts.

Let the primordial type of pure mind, (it is not the primordial mind but a sort of primordial type), which is free of all thoughts, see what is presented, read it and *become* it. Make that very mind *become* it.

[Normally] the idea of meditation on the breath is to let the mind be virtuous, have good thoughts, bodhimind. Here the emphasis is on very strongly removing all the thoughts, to almost [getting to] the primordial type of mind, a very raw mind – a bit like the mind in between wake and sleep. It is not first calming the mind and then make the mind think about bodhimind *etc.* It is that very raw mind *becoming* those

thoughts. That is very different! These are the [real] secret points. I hope it makes sense to you, I am not sure. The example is, if you have a clear glass, without any painting on it, it is easier to paint something on it.

When here they say ‘special virtuous mind’ it is not the mind looking at something, but that special virtuous mind, that sort of very raw mind itself *becoming* the path. That makes a big difference with what we normally talk in Lamrim. Here it says,

Don’t look *at* it; make the mind *become* it!

There is no duality here. The meditator becomes the meditation; the meditation becomes what you meditate; no separation. This gives us an interesting the message: even though we may think we know what we are doing, even though we may try to practice the completion stage, right here at the very, very preliminary level we are told to *become* it. No observer and observed – all one. That means: who is meditating, what is meditated on [and the meditating itself], all that *becomes* your raw mind. Whenever we hear about whether the meditation has become right or has gone wrong, probably this is what is meant.

Whenever we visualize, we observe what we project. For example, we generate ourselves in the form of Yamantaka and we acknowledge ‘I have two horns... *etc*’, but we look at it as if it is someone else. Even while meditating the union, with a consort on our lap, or meditating the four joys, we still are a kind of outsider observing it. So, I believe, this one little sentence here, saying not to observe it as an object but to make it part of the primordial mind, is really something very powerful. It says a lot. Mind you, even the words itself, ‘we generate ourselves....’ already indicates a separation. Actually we should say ‘we *become*...’

There are certain meditations -in which you are told to ‘become a cloud’ or ‘become a tree’ and you have to think, ‘I am a tree, I am a tree’, which is different from looking at a tree. Becoming a tree doesn’t serve much purpose, but *becoming* seeking freedom, *becoming* bodhimind, *becoming* emptiness makes a lot of difference.

You can’t become bodhimind or emptiness unless you have a strong idea about it. That very strong idea is the result of analyzing, which you can’t unless you learn. Therefore learning, analyzing and meditating is the solid structure for following a spiritual path. So that one little line here, *becoming* that mind rather than perceiving it, makes a lot of sense. Probably that is how you become a buddha, too. *Becoming* a buddha is different from looking at or meeting a buddha. So it makes a lot of sense. Then it says,

This is how to generate the bodhimind.

What we call ‘generate’ should be *becoming*. The explanation of the generation of the bodhimind is the usual one, based on the three scopes. However, the difference here is the *becoming* those steps: I am *becoming* love, I am *becoming* compassion, I am *becoming* the special mind, I am *becoming* the bodhimind.

This commentary also has a very interesting way of bringing the common with the medium level in. It is saying that:

All negative karma and delusions and sufferings come from the *dag dzin marigpa*<sup>126</sup>, the self-grasping ignorance. As long as you have that ego within you, you will helplessly, hopelessly keep on creating negative karma. Creating negative karma becomes the second link<sup>127</sup>. The first link, *ma rig pa* produces that without control. That [second link] automatically leaves an imprint, because once the deed is performed the responsibility remains. The imprint left becomes the third link. That imprint gets ‘rejuvenated’, brought to life by the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> link. Then birth and death, the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> link, result from that. That is how we are *becoming* samsaric.

There is no separation between me and my death, between me and my birth; it is me *becoming* that. I have this ignorance, I create karma, I leave the imprint and become that. The opposite of it is the dharma practice. But, if you don’t *become* it, if it remains a picture projected over there, it can’t affect your life, can it? No matter how much you look at it, if you don’t become it, it won’t help. These negativities we *became* by ourselves. We learned becoming negativity by experience, by what we call our habit pattern, but we did not learn how to become the positive part of it. Our problem is not lack of willingness or lack

<sup>126</sup> *bdag 'dzin ma rig pa*

<sup>127</sup> This refers to the Twelve Links of interdependent existence. Literature: Gehelek Rimpoche, *The Wheel of Existence* and Tarab Tulku, *Unity in Duality; the inter-determinate nature of all that exists*.



of dedication, it is lack of *becoming*. That tells us a lot. It tells us we are not really biting not really chewing it, we are looking at, like watching a movie. The *Kachem Lung* strongly recommends,

Not only generate the bodhimind, but to also think of emptiness. Look at the ego very strongly, see how it creates negativities, how it makes us negative, how it keeps us in samsara, with no control over our life, with pain and joy, having a mixed life. Ego is the one who is holding us in samsara, guarding us like a prison guard, making sure we don't get free. Ego is the one who murders our joy and freedom and keeps us suffering. Ego is the ultimate destroyer of ourselves, sitting right in the middle of our heart. One should not only realize that, but put in all efforts to *become* the action that kicks the ego out of our system completely.

The *Kachem Lung* very detailed here, but there's nothing unusual. Generating the complete Lamrim stages, with the three motivation levels, is given here as a prerequisite to the *Lama Chöpa* practice. At the Mahayana scope it talks about *becoming* the bodhimind and *becoming* the absolute bodhimind. In order to become the absolute bodhimind you have to knowingly *become* the emptiness.

Then another important point here. Why is motivation important? The commentary quotes from a conversation between Atisha and Drom Rinpoche that refers to the vinaya sutra, which says that the mind is the most important one. Nagarjuna, writing to one of his friends, a king, says,

Well, there is not so much I can tell you, but the most useful thing is to get your mind tamed. Buddha himself says, 'The root of all spiritual development is the mind itself.'

So the mind being the most important is accepted by everyone.

### *Result-oriented refuge meditation*

Out of the uncommonly detailed preliminaries here, I like to touch one more important thing.

After having taken refuge a duplicate of Lama Buddha Shakyamuni dissolves to ourselves. Our body, speech and mind and the body, speech and mind of Lama Sakya Tubwang<sup>128</sup> becomes inseparable. Meditate on that.

Light radiates from your body, which is inseparable from Lama Buddha Shakyamuni. Your body radiates heat like sun rays, reaching the cold hells, as well as cold rays that like a snow storm reach to the hot hells. After purifying all suffering beings in the hell, removing their sufferings, they become a buddha. (This is visualizing, not becoming.)

Then light radiates again, relieves the suffering of all beings and gives each category of beings whatever they are in need of: food to the hungry ghosts, wisdom to the animals, food, medicines and wealth to the human beings, love-compassion and equanimity to the demi-gods. In short, life, luck, renunciation, awareness, conscientiousness *etc.* are sent out to all in samsara, from the top to the bottom.

Then think, 'By the kindness and compassion of the guru I have been able to liberate and help all sentient beings and bring them to the Buddha Shakyamuni state.' And rejoice.

That is a very short way of meditation on bodhimind in the result form. Usually we give you the causal meditations: what you need to develop the wish to help, *etc.* You can continue here with the four immeasurables and meditate the same way: light and liquid coming and purifying them, as usual.

### *Self-generation in the form of a yidam*

*Initiation.* That is part of the prerequisite activities here. About generating yourself in the form of a yidam there are rules. If you received a full initiation you can generate yourself in the form of a yidam; if you didn't you are not suppose to. If then you do so, not only you but even more so I, the teacher, will get a downfall. We have few people here without initiation<sup>129</sup> and the very first verse of the *Lama Chöpa* tells you generate yourself in the form of a yidam. So an adjustment has to be made. On the other hand, the *Lama Chöpa* is so well-known and widespread that in Tibet every little [Gelugpa] kid will say it. So I came to a compromise. I make a personal request to those who did not receive an initiation before, to not

<sup>128</sup> *thub dbang*, meaning 'King of the Sages' - muni.

<sup>129</sup> This time – Nijmegen 2005 – Rinpoche had opened up this teaching to non-vajrayaners with enough Lamrim background.

visualize yourself in the form of a yidam. On the other hand, we gave you a result practice of bodhimind, which included generating yourself in the form of a buddha. That may be okay.

Why does the initiation make a difference? Each maha anu yoga initiation has four initiations: vase, secret, wisdom and word initiation. The dedication prayer of the Guhyasamaja sadhana<sup>130</sup> says,

By vase initiation anointment in streams of Ganga water,  
May all percepts and concepts of the ordinary be cleansed!  
By tasting the wisdom elixir of the secret initiation,  
May energies in the speech place arise as mantra!  
By the goad of orgasmic bliss of the third (initiation)  
May the mind be drawn into the realm of clear light.  
By the Fourth's identifying the meaning of Integration,  
May reifications about the ultimate be cut off.

So, by obtaining the vase initiation, using water, the blockages of ordinary perception and conceptualization [*i.e.* accepting that perception as reality] are washed away. Also during the initiation you receive the empowerments of the five buddhas with their vows. In the secret initiation, by tasting the [wisdom] nectar the sound and energy of the individual is purified and becomes like dharmadhatu. That is sort of pre-dharmakaya: the sound and air become the pure energy that should be able to produce the dharmakaya. The secret initiation really empowers the individual to experience compassion-bodhimind as the essence of emptiness and vice versa. Sound and energy combined together gives you that idea. In the third initiation, the wisdom initiation, the joy brings your mind into the nature of clear light. The sound and air becoming one energy is actually referring to non-duality, which basically refers to a powerful state of emptiness. Because the fourth joy brings the clear light, the causal clear light has to be the third one. The fourth initiation, the word initiation, brings the union – the union of clear light and illusion body.

That is what initiation means. An initiation somehow makes the opening for people [to practice vajrayana]. But do we really get there? That is a question. We do the ritual, we you go through the ritual but whether you really get the initiation depends on the individual. Once His Holiness was giving a Kalachakra initiation in Los Angeles and there were about five thousand people and when he finished the initiation the Dalai Lama said, 'Maybe 15 or 20 of you have really received it'.

What I will talk to you today is a little bit about the process of the process of generating oneself in the form of a yidam. As I said earlier, those who did not receive the initiation, please take it as information only. Those who had an initiation, or rather sat in the initiation ritual before, can practice it. Forty percent of this commentary is on this topic. It is not only detailed but it has a lot of things you normally don't talk about. I will pick up a few of them.

*Importance of Lamrim.* This commentary talks about the Lamrim stages, more in detail even than the shorter Lamrims we know<sup>131</sup>. Lamrim is extremely important. A bad habit in the West is saying, 'Oh, Lamrim is just a Gelugpa preliminary'. That is definitely very, very wrong. Every tradition has come through the Lamrim. No enlightened one came by helicopter and just landed. Even the traditions that claim to have instant enlightenment first bring you back to all those steps, though they may not call them Lamrim steps.

Lamrim is a prerequisite. The major difference to the individual is made at the Lamrim stage. Whether you are going to be a good practitioner and become a buddha in a very short time totally depends on how you work on the Lamrim level! So Lamrim is something you should never ignore. Some may think of entering [straightaway] a higher level, but without a base that will be a castle built on ice. I have been in the West so many years now, and when I look back at the way I taught, I put a lot of efforts in the Lamrim level and for almost twenty-five years I did not talk about wisdom at all. Then I began to talk a little more wisdom; first on the Three Principles level, then a little on the Mahamudra level. Now<sup>132</sup> I am teaching wisdom. On Tuesdays in Ann Arbor I teach the ninth chapter of the *Bodhisattvacharyavatara* and on Thursdays in New York I teach the wisdom section of Tsongkhapa's *Lamrim chenmo*. I thought I do that in a year. The year has passed, but I'm just touching the beginning, and it begins to make sense to a few people. Still, that is part of Lamrim! Wisdom is something that has to be very carefully worked on: it has to be effective to people, it has to be helpful. And when I began to teach the

<sup>130</sup> *Long Gyhyasamaja sadhana* by Je Tsongkhapa, transl. Tenzin Thurman.

<sup>131</sup> Like the *De Lam* and the *Nyur Lam*

<sup>132</sup> 2005

*Lamrim chenmo* I couldn't even teach it, it was so difficult. In my mind I could not make the transition of the message and come out with something that makes sense. If you read that part of the *Lamrim chenmo*, you cannot understand it. That difficult it is! I couldn't understand it. Normally when I have to teach I don't prepare. But here I had to spend time on before. I had to look into three or four different commentaries, and then, twisting it round, it began to make sense.

*Receiving initiation.* These are the actual prerequisites of vajrayana. We are extremely fortunate that our teachers made it more and more simple. So much so that Kyabje Trijang used to say [at an initiation], 'If you have no idea what emptiness is, at this moment just think of empty, that will temporarily substitute.' And if we don't grasp that chance, we deprive ourselves of a great opportunity to practice vajrayana. You in Europe, have a real great opportunity at this moment. We lost Tarab Tulku, which is a big, big loss for us, but we still have Dagab Rinpoche here, who is not hesitating to give initiations. So you really have a great opportunity to receive a full vajrayana initiation. Do take it. Don't be afraid. We have all these precautions, thinking, 'Is it right or wrong for me?' but such an opportunity is very, very rare and the fear of right or wrong is not an issue here. Look at His Holiness. He goes everywhere to give initiations. When I was a kid, a lama who gives Kalachakra, usually did so once in a lifetime only. Kangsar Rinpoche gave it three times in his life. When he gave that initiation the third time, it was in a huge open field in Tibet with no loud speaker, so nobody could hear what he said; they could just see the little ivory damaru going. But they all considered to have taken the Kalachakra initiation. At that time Kyabje Ling Rinpoche took this initiation from Kangsar Rinpoche and then His Holiness took it from Kyabje Ling Rinpoche.

We may be afraid of going to hell if we break our vows. But, due to the way we function in our life we may go to hell too, yet it is better to go to hell with an initiation than without. Why? Remember the story of the arhat Kashyapa, who gave a [Hinayana] teaching to people close to becoming an arhat. Manjushri sneaked in and gave them a Mahayana teaching. When Kashyapa complained to Buddha about that, Buddha said, 'They may go to hell today, but after that they will reach enlightenment much quicker and easier.' If a Mahayana teaching gives that result, how much more an initiation will! <sup>133</sup>

*Generating oneself in the form of a yidam* is actually required for an uncommon mahamudra teaching. Mahamudra has two: common and uncommon or special mahamudra. For the special mahamudra self-generation is necessary. Also the prerequisite there is also called 'special prerequisite'. Other than that it may not be required [for Lama Chöpa teachings].

*Three yidams.* The recommended yidam is either Heruka, or Yamantaka or Guhyasamaja. That Yamantaka is the Thirteen-deity Yamantaka, not the Solitary Hero. That Heruka is the Luipa tradition Heruka, not the Ghantapa one. That Guhyasamaja is the *Mikyö Dorje* [Akshobya] rather than the *Jamyang Dorje* [Manjushri]. The Yamantaka Solitary Hero is good enough, even better than the Thirteen-deity one, which was the hidden practice of Tsongkhapa. Also the Ghantapa Heruka is more profound, because of having the outer Heruka initiation plus the inner body mandala initiation. Even Kalachakra or Hayagriva, or Hevajra, or any other maha anu yoga tantra yidam is fine. Recommended are the three just mentioned. In order to generate oneself in such a yidam form, one needs the essence of the development stage, which is the three-kaya practice: death as dharmakaya, bardo as sambogakaya, birth as nirmanakaya. I won't go in detail; those who know, know it already and the explanation is in the sadhana teachings. However I like to pick up a few important points of it.

*Reincarnation.* When we say, 'What is samsara?' what answer do we give? The continuation of a contaminated identity. That refers to the five skandhas and so and forth. Contaminated is, simply said, referring to whether or not you have the wisdom of emptiness<sup>134</sup>. You can also say: anything in samsara is contaminated, anything without samsara is uncontaminated. That boils down to the same. So, continuation of a contaminated identity means: birth, death, bardo continuing all the time.

Those who are not convinced there is reincarnation, will not only get stuck on vajrayana but also on bodhimind, because bodhimind won't make sense to the person unless you have [accepted the idea of] reincarnation. If your scope is only this life, it is absolutely limited. Then why should you bother about a

<sup>133</sup> For the story also see Gehlek Rimpoche, *Lam Rim Teachings*, ch. XVIII.

<sup>134</sup> Wisdom in the sense of the direct realisation of emptiness.

person in Africa, or about people in Ladhak? What would you have to do with them? Because of reincarnation you reconnect [to them]. I don't say you have to believe in reincarnation, but give it the benefit of the doubt. We are always told it is important to develop the bodhimind. The bodhimind depends on greater compassion, but if I wouldn't have reincarnation, how could I develop great compassion for all those I don't know? When speaking about the three kayas, the core practice in vajrayana, if you wouldn't have reincarnation, where would you get the bardo from? Then it would be just materials put together by the parents, it functions and when finished, it is finished. So without reincarnation we finish talking about bardo and about rebirth.

Science is great, particularly lately; many buddhist points have been proved by scientists. Scientists working on artificial intelligence talk about capturing a consciousness, blocking it in a kind of computer box and make it function. But no scientist has ever proved there is no reincarnation. Denying reincarnation without thinking about it is not an intelligent act; it is a little naïve. Sorry for using such a strong word, but without accepting reincarnation we can't talk [vajrayana]. We presume a consciousness that continues. The basis of whatever we experience is this continuation.

*Samsara.* The word in Tibetan for samsara is *khör wa*, meaning 'circling'. That provides the basis for suffering and sorrow as well as for joy. No matter how happy we pretend to be, when we talk to someone, the first and foremost thing that pops up in our head is complaints. Check for yourself. What we consider to be joy often is suffering. The older teacher used to say, 'On the tip of the samsaric needle there is no joy at all.'

The conclusion is, if samsara continues, suffering continues; if samsara stops, suffering stops. But then some people get afraid of annihilation. That dilemma we face. Don't answer it; think by yourself, answer by and for yourself only. That is again a contradiction here: you are afraid of becoming void, yet you are not convinced of reincarnation.

The earlier great master made a decision on this, 'Right, I have to completely stop this uncontrolled continuation of death, bardo and rebirth'. The question is: is it possible? The answer is: it is possible if you have the right conditions. Remember, everything is dependent; it depends on terms and conditions. When the conditions are right, things happen. When the conditions are right you can become big and fat, or when the conditions are right you can lose weight and become slim and beautiful. We know it works like that. So, to cut that contaminated continuation you need the right conditions of mental capacity. If your mind capacity is like that of a little mouse, you won't be able to do it; you know that. Human mind however has a tremendous capacity. And we happen to be humans. So take the opportunity. Somebody has done it; the information is available, correct and complete. That is why the tradition says,

Though difficult to meet, you have met with the teachings of the Buddha in general and especially with Jamgon Tsongkhapa's whispered teachings, which enable any individual, if you do it, to obtain the indestructible vajra state within a lifetime.

We have met it not in the way of that state being up there and we being down here and admiring it, but in the way we can chew it and we can really become it. If not now, when will we do it? And if not we, then someone else? Someone else cannot do it for you. So, I tell you, this is a really great opportunity and we are very fortunate to be part of it.

*Cutting samsara.* Samsara, the Wheel of Existence circles, but you can cut it. On the level of Sutrayana the only way you can cut it, is at the ignorance level, because the twelve links of that wheel are completely interlinked. By cutting the ignorance – or ego – the production is cut, by that the imprint is cut and so and forth. On the level of vajrayana you can cut samsara at birth, at death, or at the bardo level. The way and how you do it is this: meditatively you replace ordinary death by dharmakaya, bardo by sambhogakaya and rebirth by nirmanakaya. In other words, you cheat death, cheat bardo, cheat rebirth. How you do it? First learn the process of the dying stage, then learn the process of the bardo and then learn the process of the birth. After learning, you will find the key to do so. The key to change them is the wisdom, whether in sutra or tantra. Sutrayana however doesn't talk about the wisdom key in the way of cutting through death, bardo and rebirth; only vajrayana does.

*Clear light.* Here one is strongly recommended to think, 'I and all sentient beings experience the suffering of death again and again, but this time I have the opportunity to make sure I do not have to repeat this again and again.' Through what would you make this sure? Through the clear light. Vajrayana practitioners have

been taught two types of clear light: the example clear light and the absolute clear light. When the clear light comes in, what does that do? That cuts the ordinary death. In Tibetan we use the word *jang*<sup>135</sup>, which means practice, purify, perfection, all this. If you don't have to experience the ordinary death, then when you die, you will experience the extraordinary death, which is nothing but the clear light. When you *become* clear light, you have that extraordinary death. Just like that you will have extraordinary bardo and extraordinary rebirth. That is what we mean by transforming, or cutting or cheating, ordinary death, bardo and rebirth into dharmakaya, sambogakaya and nirmanakaya. The individual *becoming* the example or absolute clear light is the transforming business.

In order to become anything you have to get very familiar with it, get used to it and in order to become familiar to it you have to know about it. That we call the development stage: learn, study and then practice it. And if you keep on practicing day after day, week after week, year after year, then one day you'll merge yourself in it and you will *become* it. That is the accomplishment of what you built up by practicing.

*Emptiness.* [Remember, after having taken refuge] Lama Shakyamuni dissolves into you. Then follows the dissolving system of the HUM, combined with the elements dissolving. Finally you are left with OM SVABHAVA SHUDDHA SARVA DHARMA SVABHAVA SHUDDHOH 'HAM or OM SHUNATA JNANA VAJRA SVABHAVA ATMAKO HAM<sup>136</sup>. These two mantras give you the message of emptiness. The understanding of the wisdom of emptiness rises from analyzing and concentration. There is no emptiness without analyzing. Just being empty is a very very temporary substitute.<sup>137</sup> So analyzing is important, even at this level.

*How do you analyze.* I think it is useful to talk about it a little here. When your mind focuses on 'everything is empty, nothing is existing, it is like space', you perceive that and you merge your mind with that and recognize and acknowledge that as dharmakaya – that is the usual way we do it.

Now, within that totally focused mind, take some slight side mind, a tiny one percent piece of mind, and start looking nicely, really looking. What do you perceive? That side mind perceives, 'Sst, don't disturb, I am meditating, I am meditating on clear light.' This is a rather difficult part. In Zen they give you the example of a fish moving round in the water yet not disturbing the water. The major mind is focused on or rather merged in emptiness, 'Ssst, no disturbance'. The little side mind sees, 'I am meditating, meditating on clear light. Why am I meditating? I want to become a buddha. I am going to become a buddha, yah.' Ego-grasping, self-grasping, is showing up. The little side mind sees, 'Ah, here is self-grasping. How does that self-grasping mind perceive me who wants to become a buddha? What is that I?' When you look at that, what you see is something inside you, called 'I', rather than the combination of the right time and conditions, or parts and particles and a name. We see someone called 'me' inside somewhere. That very feeling and perception we call *tsug thug*<sup>138</sup>, 'self-standing, self-functioning'. Mind you, I did not say independent. That is what we perceive and that is what we are buying. This is a shortcut to finding the object of negation<sup>139</sup>.

That tiny little part of the mind has a lot of work to do. It saw that self-standing little 'I' functioning and a big 'me' buying that. So [the little mind asks], 'Is it really truly there as I perceive it?' And when you trace that self-standing one that you are perceiving and buying, you are not going to find anything but your skandhas<sup>140</sup>; that what is the base for the label, in Tibetan *dag zhi*<sup>141</sup>, also known as *jigta, jig tso la la wa*<sup>142</sup>. What you look at, the skandhas – our body with its functions – is nothing but perishable material, like the vegetables in our fridge: perishable, impermanent in nature, cannot remain forever. In our deep consciousness we know it. So we are constantly afraid of losing it. Somehow we know it is going to go, therefore we are always focusing on it. That is called *jig ta*: always focusing on something that is perishable. Which means it is always embedded with fear. That is what ego does. Such a dominating fear we have in our life all the time, as we Tibetans say, 'even before seeing the dead body'.

<sup>135</sup> *sbyangs*

<sup>136</sup> The last one is from the Vajrayogini sadhana

<sup>137</sup> Terugverwijzen nr Trijang

<sup>138</sup> *rang tshugs thub pa* - to be self-sustaining, capable of standing alone.

<sup>139</sup> Or object to be refuted. Also see Gehlek Rimpoche, *The Three Principles – a concise teaching*.

<sup>140</sup> form, feeling, discrimination, compositional factors and consciousness.

<sup>141</sup> *bdags gzhi*

<sup>142</sup> *jig tshogs la lta ba* – the fearful view; the belief in the transitory collection [of the skandhas] as possessing a self-entity.

According to the Prasangika-Madhyamika system, based on Buddhapalita, *jigta* itself is the real root of samsara. The two logical systems [to find the object of negation], the two logical reasons of establishing emptiness, are:

1. The four keys: I am either the same as or different from the skandhas<sup>143</sup>
2. The King of Logic: I do not truly exist because I am interdependent.

Apply those. Whenever you meditate on emptiness, this is the way. Whether sutra or tantra, Hinayana or Mahayana, it is the same principle. What can you expect at the end? You gain an understanding that labeling my skandhas as ‘me’ is just like labeling a rope as snake. A rope labeled as ‘snake’ is not a snake, your mind just labeled it as such. Likewise if my mind labels my aspects, my skandhas, as me, I am able to function, but from the point of my skandhas it is not ‘me’, ‘I’ am not there.

When then you say, ‘Where is the ‘me’, you find that ‘me’ is not there. That means by *just the combination of the base, the acknowledgement and the label* things happen: I can function. I become functional because of that combination. If, beyond that combination, you want to search for something really called ‘me’ you won’t find it. The *lack of intrinsic existence of me is the emptiness of self*. That insight is wisdom.

In one way you can make emptiness easy. In another way it is difficult. The difficulty lies on establishing existence; that is one level. Another level is that you acknowledge, ‘That very wisdom is my dharmakaya’. Or, ‘My dharmakaya combined with the joy is me, the deity’. Then you continue analyzing, ‘That deity is that my body? Or a combination? That is how you get back and forth. That is how you are going to realize emptiness, dharmakaya, clear light, all together. Very simple. Honestly.

I got the oral transmission, the *lung*, of this commentary from Lochö Rinpoche. He did it not all at the same time, but in parts, sometimes two or three pages only. It took about three or four years. I am not even sure whether I have it all completed. But at least I have it quite a way through. I am going to read it to you up to [completion of] the prerequisite level.



### 3. Purification of the Environment and Inhabitants

#### Dissolving the Refuge Field<sup>144</sup>

Before you purify, you should have the power and ability to purify. So, first you have to dissolve the objects of refuge, the Refuge Tree.

Light is generated from the principle object of refuge. Through that, all retinues dissolve to the principal, Lama Lozang. He now dissolves to Tubwang, that is Buddha Shakyamuni, who then dissolves to Dorjechang, Buddha Vajradhara, and he transforms into a small blue light which dissolves to me.

It is as if you have breath on a mirror. You get some kind of steam and if you look for a minute you will see that the steam dissolves from the edges into the center and in the center it disappears. So the whole elaborate refuge tree finally dissolves to the Lama, he to the commitment being, he to the concentration being which then dissolves to you.

It is the same as in all the sadhanas where you also dissolve the Refuge Tree to yourself. Yamantaka, Vajrayogini, all of them have it. In Vajrayogini, the Lama becomes a red light ball the size of a bird egg which then dissolves to you. In Yamantaka, all the objects of refuge dissolve to you.

It is also very similar to what you do at the end of the *Lama Chöpa*. There, the whole lineage dissolves to the principal, then you yourself merge with the mind of the enlightened beings, the mind of the objects of refuge, the mind of the Guru, all of them together as one, and you concentrate within that

<sup>143</sup> Literature: opzoeken

<sup>144</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 61-62.

sphere of the joy of merging. You can sit for a minute in that one taste of yourself and the lama. I won't go into detail, because this will come at the end.

Through this process, you receive the blessings of all the objects of refuge. 'Blessing' is actually not the best word here. You need a more powerful expression:

With this, I am blessed. With this, I have become somebody, I have become worthwhile, I have become capable. Stay concentratedly for a while within that visualization. Concentration is what is called for here.

The joy which you develop at this point is not ordinary joy, but great pleasure like when a mother and child who have been separated for a long time reunite, or when father and son meet after a long separation. [Finding one's heart's desire, what one has been looking for all one's life.] Of course there is happiness and joy!

### Self-generation as the Deity<sup>145</sup>

*dhe chen ngang lay rang nyi la ma lha...*

#### st. 1. **From Great Bliss I arise as the Lama Yidam.**

*From Great Bliss I arise....* You can't say that without first having the bliss. That is why I tried to give you a little time to concentrate, saying this is what is called for. The merging of the objects of refuge with us brings joy. When you intensify such a joy, make it brighter and powerful, it brings you to a state of great bliss. Maybe not great bliss, but something, some degree of joy or bliss. From within the sphere of that joy you arise as the Guru Yidam. The word in Tibetan is *la ma lha*. *Lha* is a very common word that can be used for yidam, god, or protectors and even for land or water deities. In this context here it means yidam.

You can rise in Buddha Vajradhara form or as Buddha Shakyamuni, or as anybody you want to, because in emptiness there is freedom that makes it possible to do whatever you want. However, it is recommended to arise as Yamantaka. The reason is that the *Lama Chöpa* intends to bring three practices together: 1) Yamantaka in the beginning; 2) Guhyasamaja in the middle; 3) Heruka as additional branch activity. In order to bring all three together, it is recommended to rise as Yamantaka, with or without consort, whatever you feel like doing.

In this *Lama Chöpa* guru-yoga practice the development-stage is worked through Yamantaka, the offerings are according to Heruka, and the completion stage is according to Guhyasamaja, which is supposed to be the top-level.

If you don't have Yamantaka initiation, you can't arise as Yamantaka, but you can arise as Vajradhara or Shakyamuni or whatever. I am providing you with three different dishes, but you don't have to eat all of them. You don't have to eat only one of them either.

So, you can arise as whatever you feel comfortable with. The choice is yours. There are all these deities and they are all equal. Nobody is more equal than anybody else. Everything is perfect. There is a Heruka version of the elaborate Lama Chöpa. There is also a Yamantaka version. I may talk about that more another time. But since you say *From Great Bliss I arise as the Lama Yidam*, it can be any yidam. You can use the Guhyasamaja form or Buddha Vajradhara – which is the Guhyasamaja form anyway. It is at your own convenience. You can use Cittamani Tara but I am not sure whether you can use White Tara, because she falls under the category of kriya tantra. We may have to limit it to the Maha anu yoga tantra deities. The arising in the form of the deity you can do either in an elaborate way through the three kayas, as I am about to describe, or you can do it fast in the flip-flop style, like turning over a hamburger. When you start the Lama Chöpa with *de chen nang le*, that is, the way it was written originally by the First Panchen Lama, you do it in the flip flop style, like turning over a hamburger. You take refuge to McDonalds! [laughs]

Audience: Can you spontaneously arise as the yidam without generating the refuge field in front of you first?

Rinpoche: That is right. Both systems are okay.

<sup>145</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 62-68; Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 52-54, 58-60.

Audience: If, instead of Yamantaka, we arise as Heruka or whatever, does that change any of the visualizations in the practice?

Rinpoche: Not at this level, but if you go down a little bit... In the text you are generating the Merit tree and when you generate Heruka in there, the whole Heruka visualization comes in.

*Dhe chen.* *Dhe wa* means joy or bliss and *chen po* means big or great, so this refers to great bliss. Though I am talking about this now, that great bliss is actually foreign to us at this moment. We don't have a proper understanding of what great bliss really is. But though we don't really know, we are going to use the word and go through with it, otherwise we'll be wasting time. Within that great bliss, you change yourself into the form of a *lama yidam* or *lama lha*. *Lha* actually refers to God or god, in Sanskrit *deva*. So sometimes it becomes lama-deva or guru-deva in the translations, but what you really do is train yourself to tune in to the form of Lama Buddha Vajradhara.

*Dhe chen nang lay.* Vajrayana practitioners are expected to ultimately spend their time and life within great joy, rather than living a miserable life. They are expected to live within the great joy. Talking about the great joy, I don't think we are talking about being free of illnesses or free of problems. No. Neither are we talking about living with an orgasm all the time. This particular great bliss we are talking here is: whatever happens, it brings no suffering to the individual. Even if the circumstances are very difficult, even then that particular circumstances and conditions really do not bother the individual very much. How joyful that state is, depends on the level of the individual. It differs from person to person. You have to understand great bliss in that way, rather than as some kind of electrically hooked charging all the time.

When you are saying here *nang lay*, though the English translation is a good translation, but any translation can ever express the Tibetan word. This particular word has a value of not only rising from that, but remaining within that. It is a sort of a "whole" where you are coming from and where you are going to, and that has the status of great bliss. From that one rises. And not only bliss. Bliss is method, not wisdom. (I hope you understand what I am talking about.) Understanding and recognition of the emptiness is wisdom. And though the word does not say directly "from the wisdom and method", you have to understand it is there. People like us, who don't understand emptiness very well, or maybe not at all, temporarily use the substitute of space-like emptiness, completely void-like space: nothing to be seen or touched. Like an open space. That represents it. So within that emptiness anything can pop up because there is room. You yourself pop up in the form of a Lama Yidam.

This verse was removed from the beginning of the text and placed here. Switching the two verses round is the teaching lineage tradition. There is a reason for this. Here we're basically talking to people who do not really have a properly trained mind that is able to tune in immediately. For their benefit, we start with the preliminaries, taking refuge and generating bodhimind, ordinary, extraordinary and special. Those stages for untrained people can bring a person into what is described in the verse *de chen nang le*. For people that are very well trained, it doesn't matter, they can straight away hit this verse. The First Panchen Lama has written it that way and it can be done according to that system. From Dharmabadra onwards however, it was the established practice to do the refuge and bodhicitta first and only then to practice self-generation. I don't know what Yongdzin Yeshe Gyaltsen's commentary says at this point. (It is such an elaborate commentary –so huge and detailed, with so many explanations. And there is no conclusion! I am not criticizing him, but that is just my limited observation.) After that more or less all the commentaries, including Pabongka's writings on the Lama Chöpa in conjunction with Heruka and Yamantaka, have the *rab kar ge sem* verse go first, then refuge and bodhimind and only then the verse starting with *de chen nang lay*. Both systems are perfect, nothing is wrong. It is also important sometimes to read the *Lama Chöpa* straight forward, rather than adding up so many things. Everybody adds up so many things. In one way it is the Guru Yoga as backbone and everything added up – everything included, nothing excluded. But also sometimes it is good to say it straight forward as in the original, like they do in the great monasteries, Drepung, Sera and Ganden. They don't twist anything. Both systems are okay. So:

From such great bliss which is inseparable from emptiness, I, the individual, now arise as the Lama and Yidam, in this case Yamantaka. Lama and Yidam are inseparable. You commonly arise in the Yamantaka form with consort, and with one face and two hands. You are standing on



a sun- and lotus cushion.

## Purification of the Environment and Inhabitants<sup>146</sup>

....  
*gang der sal way ku lay ö zer tsoh*  
*choh chur trö pay nö chü chin lab pay*  
*dak pa rap jam ba zhik yön ten gyi*  
*kü pay kye par phün sum tsok par gyur.*

- st. 1. **My body radiates light, transforming all existence.  
 Everything becomes pure.**

We are now qualified to do the purification.

*My body radiates light.* Light goes out from the important points of my body, from the letter HUM at the heart level of [oneself as] Yamantaka **or** from the point of union of Yamantaka and consort.

That light has the three qualities: (1) in reality it is the bliss-void inseparable, the nature is bliss-void; (2) in appearance they are light rays; (3) their activity is to purify all impure inhabitants or environments.

*Transforming all existence.* The light radiates into the ten directions and the light rays reach to all environment and inhabitants, transforming all existence.

*Everything becomes pure.* Everything becomes completely clean and clear, becomes pure land and pure mandala. All beings are in the form of Yamantaka.

In your own personal perception you are also free of ordinary appearance as well as ordinary conceptualization. In reality everything is pure in nature. That purity is also in joy nature.

It is not only pure nature but also pure appearance. Every offering, every existence has a tremendous amount of wonderful qualities.

The quality is more important than anything else. It is all well-designed and decorated and very artistically presented. It has the beauty-touch of artistic presentation. Every offering, every set up, you yourself and every environment, becomes like that. So the statement that everything becomes pure does not end there. There has to be a little more than that.

The reason the light radiates from the point of union is not only because that is the source of joy, but it is the source of birth, of giving. The mandala is creation, the yidam the creator.

So, with these light rays, you bless the environment and inhabitants. Because you have merged with the objects of refuge and transformed yourself, you are able to radiate light from your body, which reaches all the environment and inhabitants. Just by the touch of your light, the environment becomes pure and the inhabitants become enlightened beings. This is what you have to think. It will not actually happen right now, but that is how you will function once you are enlightened. When you are enlightened, you will do it effortlessly. It will just happen that way.

On our ordinary level, we don't have that capability, but we do it as a result-oriented practice. That is what Vajrayana is, result-oriented practice. You are rehearsing it right now, training yourself to be able to do it effortlessly.

Karma works with conditions. When the conditions are right, it will definitely happen. So here we presume the conditions are already right. If there is openness, it will happen. If there is no openness, it cannot be forced. If the door is shut, you can't poke it in, don't think in dirty ways here, but that is what it is. If there is openness, you get through, you can do it here. All inhabitants become pure beings and the entire environment becomes pure.

<sup>146</sup> Lit: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 68-70; Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 53-54.



### Self-generation as the deity and Purifying the Environment – elaborate explanation<sup>147</sup>

When the object of refuge dissolves to you and you become joyful and happy, you radiate light rays in all directions expressing your happiness. The light reaches everywhere. All existence melts into the nature of emptiness, then dissolves to you and you yourself also dissolve into the nature of emptiness – the *Dharmakaya*.

Here you can use the *Dharmakaya* practices mentioned in all the sadhanas. If you want to do the Yamantaka sadhana in conjunction with the *Lama Chöpa*, you can do that.<sup>148</sup>

The process is the dissolution into emptiness. The purification process in Vajrayana is really just that. I looked into many texts and it seems that the same process is used, whether you look into the development stage or the completion stage. The difference is how intensified it is. Real purification is the death and dying process, the *Dharmakaya* process. What we are trying to do is to experience that process within our lifetime, without depending on actually dying. The way to experience this process is by opening your central channel, which is why the opening of the central channel is extremely important. Not only must the central channel open, but also the energies must enter the central channel, and not only enter, but remain and even dissolve into the central channel. When this happens, the process becomes even more intensified than at death itself, and this can be experienced within one's lifetime. This is the key which makes it possible for an individual to obtain total enlightenment within a lifetime.

At the beginners' level, we first simply try to imagine, then we try to concentrate a little more and intensify our level of concentration, until our concentration gains a little more power and that process begins to actualize within our body. When it starts to actualize, the central channel will begin to open and then you keep on learning the process and I believe that is what really makes it possible. But I believe you have to have great good fortune. You have to have all the methods available to you. And then, this is the only process. When Vajrayana talks about transformation, this is what it is. When you take the five skandhas, form transforms into Vairochana, the mind into this Buddha and that Buddha, so they transform into the **Five Buddhas**.<sup>149</sup> And there are the **Five Wisdoms** into which the five delusions transform.<sup>150</sup> This is the only way to achieve it. So the exercise of how to go through this process is introduced even at this level, where you transform the whole environment and the inhabitants and dissolve them into you, go through the whole process of *dissolution* and then *generate* again.

This really is the key! And the distinction is how intensified it can be. This depends on luck and experience and training and knowledge, all of them. Even if you have all the methods and tools, all the knowledge available, if you don't have luck, you won't be able to do it. You do need luck, too. The skill, the luck and the experience, you need all of them. If you have the skill, but you don't have luck, it won't work. Having luck without the skill: forget about it. If you have skill and luck, but lack the experience: forget about it. It will be superficial and shallow and will not intensify.

This process is actually how you bless everything. When we say our food blessing, "OM AH HUM HA HO HRIH - all faults of color, smell and potential are purified," or when you say, during the sadhanas, "OM SVABHAVA SHUDDAH SARVA DHARMA SVABHAVA SHUDDOH HAM - everything is empty; from the emptiness arises RAM, YAM, [and from] KAM the skull cup in which are the five meats and five nectars....." in all of these, this process is the key. If you have emptiness, you have freedom. Once you have freedom, you can rise in any form you want as I told you earlier. Emptiness is linked with freedom and freedom is linked with emptiness.

<sup>147</sup> As this is a combination of several teaching retreats, in which Rinpoche takes different angles and follows different commentaries, for some points we've chosen to keep the commentaries separate. They are put between vajras.

<sup>148</sup> See page 210.

<sup>149</sup> The five Buddhas: the skandha of form becomes Buddha Vairochana; the skandha of feeling becomes Buddha Ratnasambhava, the skandha of perception becomes Buddha Amitabha, the skandha of volition or motivating factors becomes Buddha Amoghasiddhi, the skandha of consciousness becomes Buddha Akshobya.

<sup>150</sup> The five wisdoms: ignorance becomes mirror-like wisdom, pride becomes the wisdom of equality, attachment becomes discriminating wisdom, jealousy becomes all-accomplishing wisdom, anger/hatred becomes the all-encompassing wisdom of dharmadhatu.

Now if you have the *Dharmakaya*, you will have the *Sambhogakaya*, too. This will be the blue light. And the *Nirmanakaya* will be the full-fledged Yamantaka, with or without consort.

Then, light goes from that body, that *Nirmanakaya*, and blesses everything and everything becomes completely pure.

That extraordinary pure good quality is not possible through ordinary karma or methods. It has to be extraordinarily produced by the exercise of extraordinary or enlightened beings. That is why one of the translations says ‘immaculately pure’.

We talked earlier about blessing each and every realm and then the whole of samsara in general.<sup>151</sup> Here it doesn’t refer so much to particular samsaric places, but to the total environment and all inhabitants. The light is the activities or manifestations or actions of Lama Buddha Vajradhara [or Lama Yamantaka]. Who is that? Yourself, in the form of Lama Buddha Vajradhara [or Lama Yamantaka]. What are you generating? Your manifestation, your positive karmic result. In what form? In the form of light. For what purpose? To purify. To purify what? The environment and its inhabitants, all of them. Pure not only means pure, but most beautiful as well. Everything becomes a perfect and beautiful environment with its own qualities including all the different offerings and everything around.

### The Three-Kaya Practice<sup>152</sup>

*What it means and why we need it*

Can an ordinary person bless the environment and its inhabitants and everything? The answer is no. Then what are you supposed to do? You have to generate yourself into the form of a deity, a Yidam. What does that mean, generating yourself in the form of a Yidam? Why you do that? Not only for purification and blessing. For us it is extremely important to be able to have the three-kaya practice, the practice of the three different bodies: the body of truth or *Dharmakaya*; the enjoyment-body or *Sambhogakaya*, and then the manifestation body, which we are able to perceive with our ordinary senses, called *Nirmanakaya*.

The first one is technically called *Dharmakaya*. Earlier, during the discussion between Manjushri<sup>153</sup> and Je Tsongkhapa we talked about the union of body and mind. The body of this union is not an ordinary body but an illusion body, and this mind is not an ordinary mind, but the wisdom mind of clear light.

When these are joined at the time you become a Buddha, though body and mind become of the same frequency, which one can you describe first? Mental experience hits the individual first. You can almost say that our mind becomes part of a huge enlightened mind, like a drop of water mixed in a big sea. This may not be a totally correct explanation, but to give some idea I like to say it this way. Kedrub Je in particular objected to this, but for Gyeltsab Je it was okay to think this way. So my mind joins that huge sea of enlightened mind, sort of merges in it. That particular aspect of the body-mind union, the mind at that level is what we refer to as *Dharmakaya*. In other words, the first thing that you experience is a sort of... no color, no shape, a great pervasive state of being, called *Dharmakaya*. Probably it is not the right explanation, but just to get some idea it will do.

Then the second step, *Sambhogakaya*. Though there is almost no individual identity, you have sort of lost all separate identity, you do need some separate physical appearance in order to act for others’ benefit. So you take on a subtle form, but that form is first an exclusive form only visible or accessible to ‘qualified club members’. It is sort of like a very exclusive, high-class, expensive, high society club. So you do have a physical form, yet not accessible to everybody, only to a selected few. Why is it high class? Because it is an enjoyment body, without problems, full of joy, it is the purest of pure lands, really most exclusive.

The sambhogakaya has five qualities:

1. *Quality of retinue* [Tib. *kor nge pa*]. Expensive, because only persons with those qualities can get in. Access only for *Aryas*.<sup>154</sup>

<sup>151</sup> See page 44.

<sup>152</sup> From here down to the drawing of the vajra is the elaborate preparation for the verse *De chen nang le* as taught in the first year, winter retreat 1994-1995.

<sup>153</sup> See page 22.

<sup>154</sup> Persons who have achieved at least the path of seeing.

2. *Quality of place* [Tib. *ne nge pa*]. It is a definite area, it is not everywhere. It is some kind of exclusive area, according to the sutras called Akanishta.
3. *Quality of time* [Tib. *du nge pa*]. Also time is different; whether it is timeless or going beyond time, there is definitely no time-pressure. Everything is present, the past hasn't passed away, the future is not future, the present is present. All is happening, neither gone nor going.
4. *Quality of ornaments*. [This refers to the 32 major and 80 minor marks of a Buddha.]<sup>155</sup>
5. *Quality of Dharma* [Tib. *chö nge pa*]. That is the quality of enlightened activity, the highest, best, very exclusive activity.<sup>156</sup>

That is what we call enjoyment body. So, when you come out of that pervasive state of *Dharmakaya*, the first physical shape you take on is this level of qualities, called *Sambhogakaya*.

But when your form is too exclusive, it may defeat your purpose. The purpose of your attaining enlightenment is to help everyone. If you're not accessible to all beings, how can you really do your work? Without leaving behind the *Dharmakaya* and *Sambhogakaya*, you pick-up or take on another form. You are limitless. You choose a body that everybody can see, touch, converse with, and talk to. Technically we call it *Nirmanakaya* or manifestation body.

The difference between *Sambhogakaya* and *Nirmanakaya* is that the *Sambhogakaya* only functions with *Aryas*, whereas the *Nirmanakaya* functions with everybody.

Why do we need this three-kaya practice of the development stage here?

1. To protect ourselves from outer and inner obstacles.
2. To obtain blessings of the deity quickly.
3. To accomplish the accumulation of merit.
4. In particular, we need this practice to overcome ordinary perception and conceptualization.

These are the reasons why it is strongly recommended, but that doesn't mean that you do have to do all this if you say *Lama Chöpa* every day. It is part of your sadhana, so you have it already, and it is also easy to combine them together.

In the long detailed *Lama Chöpa* it says here: OM SVABHAVA SHUDDHAH SARWA DHARMAH SVABHAVA SHUDDHO HAM – instantaneous rise into the Yidam. Those of us trained a little bit in that, may probably think here a little bit on blank empty, then may imagine a little bit of blue light and head and hands popping out. Probably you have at least some idea of the three-kaya practice that way. However, the majority will still have a big problem with that; it is not going to work. So we need to talk about it here in more detail. Particularly in this tradition, at this level, there is more than that.

### *The Practice itself*

What kind of practice is it? Just as you do exercises for your body, here you do exercises for your mind, for *you* actually. On what basis do you practice? The basis is ordinary **death**, ordinary **bardo** and ordinary **rebirth**. What are you doing? Making perfection out of those stages, the stage of dying, the stage of bardo, and the stage of rebirth. Through all three of them you become perfect.

Technically we talk about “during the base, during the path, during the result.” That may be confusing to a couple of people, though not to everybody. If you keep on doing this until you become perfect at it, you are not going to experience death; instead of dying, you are going to get the **clear light**; instead of taking rebirth as a crying baby, you will have an **illusion body**. That is why you do this practice. When you are perfect at it, you're not going to die; instead of dying you will attain the *Dharmakaya*, instead of the bardo, the *Sambhogakaya*, instead of rebirth, the *Nirmanakaya*. That is the actual result you're going to get.

The three-kaya practice is the mind exercise which will be able to accomplish this result. It is like with physical exercises: when you keep on doing them, you won't see yourself changing, but in the long term you lose weight and gain a healthy body. Likewise for the mind, if you keep on doing it, you get that result. That is the reason why people with a sadhana-commitment do the three-kaya practice every day.

<sup>155</sup> Those are listed in Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in Our Hands*, vol. II, p. 308-314. For a description of the 32 major marks see Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, *An Anthology of Well-Spoken Advice*, p. 242-250.

<sup>156</sup> A sambhogakaya spontaneously and automatically teaches the Mahayana teachings.

Mind you, we are not talking about a ‘not-dying yoga’. The point is to avoid ordinary death, to avoid ordinary bardo and to avoid uncontrolled rebirth. That is what you are training for. This is what the whole practice of Vajrayana is for. Really, the Vajrayana results are going to be brought about by this practice.

There are people who say millions of mantras. That is great; they are going to get the blessings of the Yidam and the benefits of saying the mantra, but they are not going to achieve more than that. Saying mantras alone is not capable of delivering enlightenment, otherwise everybody could say mantras and do nothing else, we could just spend all our time on saying mantras, writing mantras on computer, putting them on loudspeakers, radios, *etc.* You can do that, but that is not going to deliver enlightenment. You get benefit, sure, tremendous benefit and blessings of the Yidam, but it is not going to be enough. When you talk about the basic essence practice of Vajrayana, this is what it is all about: transforming ordinary, uncontrolled death into extra-ordinary *Dharmakaya*, transforming ordinary, uncontrolled bardo into extra-ordinary *Sambhogakaya*, transforming ordinary, uncontrolled rebirth into a perfect *Nirmanakaya*. This is what Vajrayana is all about.

Because of those ordinary states of death, bardo and rebirth we say samsara is the continuation of contaminated identity. What are we continuing? We are continuing the circle of birth, death, the in-between stage (bardo) and birth again. Who is going through it? The individual person. Do you know it? Later you’ll know, not now. Who is experiencing it? Me. Not a separate person, but *me*. Do I carry the experience continuously? Probably no; we will forget about it, a new experience turns up and you forget about the former ones. Like when you have moved from New York to California after a couple of years, you have forgotten about the cold, in the same way life after life the experiences are gone. You have suffered, you have been tortured, you have cried, you died, you came back, you enjoyed, you suffered, you were tortured, you die, you come back – it constantly goes on and do you remember what happened? Probably not. But you will feel and experience those things when you go on through life after life. The continuation of that is called samsara. That is the true samsara. Don’t look outside, it is within you!

When you want to get liberated from that, when you want to cut that, when you want to cheat that, when you want to transform that, it is also not an external thing; it is internal work you have to do. How you do it is through this mental aerobics exercise.

It is mental aerobics. Do you get the idea? This is important, otherwise you will say, “What is this all about?” People think, “Imagining death and the dying stage is good for me, because everybody is going to die; I need to know a little bit about it, so that I can have control over it.” The control-issue is our usual human thing, and people don’t see anything of importance beyond that. People who do this practice probably either begin to feel it little bit or else have a strong, almost blind, faith; that is why they are doing it. I want you to get some idea which you can really think about and hold on to, something you can relay to your mind. So get the idea of mental aerobics, so that you’ll have a beautiful, slim, nice, young mind.

### *Preliminary*

How does it work? You need a fundamental basis, which is the common preliminary practice: 1) seeking freedom, 2) generating the bodhimind and 3) gaining some idea of wisdom, the nature of reality. That is called *The Three Principles*. Now you see why that is so important!

Why is seeking freedom necessary? You have to remember that we are not totally free, particularly we are not free of death, we are not free of the bardo, we have no freedom in our rebirth, do we? Ask questions, ask yourself, “What is all this? Where is rebirth? How? What?” Probably we have to answer ourselves, “I don’t even know.” Nothing to be surprised about, it is common, don’t feel bad about it, that is the level where we are, there is nothing wrong with it. Dying, sure we know! I have seen so many that are gone, so I know that I myself have to go. So dying is easy to understand. Rebirth is difficult, because there is a wall in between called death and we can’t see beyond that, we don’t hear beyond that, there are no telephone connections. There are people who sit at a table and move the table and get messages from ‘the other side’. We are not convinced by that, it is not scientific enough. That is why we have this problem. So see how shaky we are, even on the foundation of seeking freedom, technically called renunciation. How shaky we are at that level!

And at the same time how little are we convinced about death and dying. What we are convinced of so far is that death is definite, we're not convinced of the second point: the time of death is indefinite, the uncertainty of the time left. People like to think of living long, one hundred years or even longer.

We really don't think of what is happening. Why? First of all people have a lot of fear of dying. Nobody wants to die. You're so afraid that you don't want to hear it. You have no idea what is going to happen. Then also there are a number of mischievous people around telling everybody, "Death is beautiful, just be there, hold a hand and everything is wonderful." We like to believe that; we don't want to hear bad things about death. But what you really have to know is the information that is withheld. Particularly the new ones, the younger ones should hear it, though we don't want them to get frightened or run away ten miles without looking backwards. This particular commentary has a very interesting way of talking about it. If you do this in meditation it is very useful.

### *Meditation on Death*

When the time of death really comes what happens? We have to be separated from our body, wealth and strength, and from each and every one we care about. Although we don't want to, and although we resist, unwillingly, helplessly, we have to separate. Our hope of continuing to live, of holding on, has completely changed into hopelessness.

We begin to get different signs. Very fearful messengers of Yama show all sorts of hallucinations. The hope of continuing to live is over. Strong regret for our negativities comes up. Some people may even get a little spark of the feeling of the lower realms.<sup>157</sup>

Actually when people get hallucinations, they are the messengers of the Lord of Death, Yama. Some people experience manifestations of bad things. We have heard a lot of stories: butchers before they die have seen buffaloes and cows jumping around and smashing them in between. As I told you from my personal experience, some good people heard singing and music as they were dying. People may get those sorts of symptoms, quite a while before they pass away. Some of them are actual symptoms of the reality, some of them are ghost-effects; that happens, too. It does not necessarily only happen when a person is bad, a person may be very highly developed, but some obstacles manifest; that also happens.

By that time, you have a very strong regret for your negativities and you're getting the sparks of the lower realms, they begin almost to materialize. That is why some people are so scared, sometimes it is a sign of those things.

You can't move, because you have lost the control of the physical body, and have no control of emotions, either. The four elements start dissolving, and the first sign, the **earth-element** dissolving into the water-element, is sometimes very difficult. You feel like you are being buried under a huge mountain, which has collapsed on you. Or you feel yourself sinking in the ground or a huge quick sand and you want to say, 'Pull me up, pull me up!'; you raise your hands and do all sort of things. This vision is absolutely blurred, the **mirage** becomes very strong and very blurry.

Normally they present the good signs, the signs experienced in a good way, but now I am giving you the bad signs, experienced in a bad way. You have to learn it both ways.

When the **water-element** dissolves into the fire-element, you yourself caught in a huge current of water, like a dam burst or something, and it is smoky too; you are caught in the middle of it and are carried away. You see the **smoky**-colored sign and you feel you are completely helpless, swept away by a huge current and you can do nothing about it. That sort of feeling.

When the **fire-element** dissolves into the air-element you have the hallucination of being caught in a huge forest fire and you are in fire. You have the feeling of burning and you see **sparks** everywhere.

When the **air-element** dissolves into consciousness you have a feeling of **burning lamps**.

The moment the air-element has dissolved into the consciousness you have a **whitish** feeling, then **reddish**, then **black** and sort of lost.

<sup>157</sup> Rinpoche tells the story of the smuggler. See: *Lam Rim Teachings*, chapter on Death..

These are there. Still I have given you a very little dose of it, not even ten percent. You don't have to experience yourself in the actual physical condition of dying to do the practice, but you meditate the death-stage in such a way that it almost becomes a physical experience.

If you want to go in detail through that meditation, read Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo's *Heart Spoon, Encouragement Through Recollecting Impermanence*.<sup>158</sup> It really tugs at your heartstrings. Read that and meditate on it. It is really very effective. The sufferings that you experience while dying and even before death, are completely covered, all these stages are there. Then, if you want to go on, one of the Panchen Lamas wrote *The Essence of the Three Points*, about the bardo stage and particularly about seeking liberation through the narrow passage of the bardo. That contains very strong descriptions of the experiences one goes through.<sup>159</sup>

When we talk about death, we say it is nice and natural and blah, blah, blah. In a way it is true and in a way it is blah, blah, too. The reality is, and you must know this, when an individual goes through the dying process, not everybody experiences its wonderful beautiful nature. Also, you should know that not everybody necessarily experiences horrible hallucinations, either. So, if at that time you begin to experience wonderful things, appreciate what you did. And if you experience fearful hallucinations or whatever, remember the object of refuge.

We always say the cause of taking refuge is fear. At the actual time of death, you could have a horrible experience, you might begin to see terrifying creatures coming towards you saying, "Here is the one, beat him, catch him, tie him up, cut off his nose," etc. That happens to some people. One of the hell-realms is the realm of cutting you into pieces; it is of very fearful nature. When you have these sorts of experiences, the antidote is to remember refuge, saying *Namo Gurubhye, Namō Buddhaya, Namō Dharmaya, Namō Sanghaya*; at least that level. Better than that is looking at emptiness, recognizing what happens as merely a hallucination, which in the nature of reality is totally empty. So think, "Who I am afraid of? Why am I hallucinating? Who is making the hallucination? What is it but in the nature of emptiness?" That you can do.

At that moment, we are really almost out of this strange physical body, so it is very fragile and therefore our senses are extremely sensitive. You know, if you take some drugs, your senses become very sensitive. If you do a sadhana after smoking pot, I believe you experience it differently, much more sensitively. Be aware of this. Likewise, at the time of death the experiences that you have are exaggerated, the noise that you hear is almost not outside, but deep inside in your consciousness, the smell you get is not an outside smell, but deep down inside somewhere, and the colors you see are completely exaggerated.

Therefore, any feeling or sensation, for instance of being carried by a stream, is not an ordinary feeling; what you perceive is intensified, a great deal more intense. In this way, the purpose of either joy or suffering is served, because the individual experiences huge amounts of joy or suffering, even though it is very little in reality. This, we know, can happen even now through the influence of chemicals. At the time of the death it is much more, because the body, the basis on which we are existing, is at that moment very fragile as well as very sensitive. That is why our experiences at that time are much more powerful and more effective, more joyful or more terrifying, whatever the experience may be. Whether it is, in reality, there or not, it serves the purpose; because the individual does experience it, it becomes relative reality. That sort of suffering we have. So you have to visualize and think:

Not only do I have to go through these sufferings, like me all these countless sentient beings will have to go through this very suffering, the 'torture-chamber-called-death' experience. I must do something now, so that I and all those people I care for, don't have to experience this at all. I must do something so that I don't have to experience death, and so that those people that I care for do not have to experience death, neither the suffering part nor death itself.

If you really keep on practicing this dying stage, first imagine it, try to make it up by mind and understanding, try to build it up, try to imagine or visualize going through the process. That is how you practice, and after a little while, when your mind gets used to it, without putting much effort in, it will start functioning sort of automatically so that you can go through it very easily. When you do that, it will have a mental and

<sup>158</sup> In German translation: Pabongka, *Stachel im Herzen; Eine Meditation über Unbeständigkeit*, Chödzung, Buddhistische Zentrum 1991. Also see: Gehlek Rimpoche, *Lam Rim Teachings*, chapter on Death.

<sup>159</sup> Further literature on the stages of dying: Lati Rinpoche and Jeffrey Hopkins, *Death, Intermediate State and Rebirth*.

physical effect. When we have that mental and physical effect actually taking place, the signs that we imaginatively built up begin really to appear to us and we literally begin to have those experiences.

So not missing a point and having the points in the proper order is necessary, not only in the development stage of Vajrayana, even in Lamrim. There we call them outlines, but in reality, these are the steps. It is important to have them complete and in the right order, so that it happens accordingly and you don't get stuck somewhere in between, which does happen to a lot of people who do one single practice only.

It is really dangerous to pick up one single practice, like kundalini, and try to do it. In the beginning nothing happens, so it doesn't matter, but if you really keep on doing it for a while, you will get stuck somewhere. Some people who do only kundalini by themselves experience nothing but the heat getting stuck on their head; they are burning and don't know how to get out of it. Even if you have a proper practice like this, even then, if it is not complete or not in the right order, you can get into trouble.

If the practice is okay and you keep on practicing it, it literally appears to you. You don't have to die, but these experiences will come. When those experiences come, then you are naturally substituting for ordinary death, you sort of cheat death, just leave the body and change. That is where Longdo Lama says:

In the morning I am an old monk, I can't even move,  
but I am happy to switch into a beautiful handsome young god in the evening.

That is how you change. Also the idea of reincarnated lamas is supposed to be that way.

I have to do something. I don't want to experience death and I don't want all mother sentient beings, for whom I care so much, to experience it. So what do I do? I can practice this and even develop the actual clear light without depending on ordinary death. If I can do that, I would like to do it. I want to do it and I pray that I may be able to do this.

As you think and meditate in this way, the objects of refuge dissolve into you and you obtain their total blessings.

Then go according to your own practice. If you have different practices, you can go turn by turn or whatever you feel comfortable with. But if it is a *kriya* or *charya* Tantra practice, I don't think it serves the purpose, it has to be *maha anu yoga* Tantra.

### *1. Transforming Death into Dharmakaya*

Let us say you are in the form of Yamantaka. You have OM at your crown, representing the body of all enlightened beings, AH at the throat, representing the speech of all enlightened beings and HUM at the heart, representing the mind of all enlightened beings. If you are with consort, then from the point of union of the sex-organs of the male, Yamantaka, and the consort, Vajra Zombini, a tremendous amount of red<sup>160</sup> light, which in reality is blissful nature, is generated. From the letter HUM at the heart-level of Yamantaka, light is generated as well. The light from these two points of the body touches all the environment, and everything is changed into a pure environment; all houses change into inconceivable mansions and all inhabitants change into Yamantaka or the consort. As I told you earlier, "all males are Avalokiteshvara, all females are Tara," in that manner, every creature becomes a Yamantaka, all the environment is pure, and every structure is a mandala.

1. Gradually, the total pure environment dissolves into the inhabitants and the inhabitants, who are in the form of Yamantaka, melt into light and dissolve into you, yourself in the form of Yamantaka. The earth-element dissolves into the water-element (I use the words 'earth-element dissolving', but actually it means that the earth-element is no longer functioning, which means that bones and flesh are not working). The sign is a **mirage-like appearance**.

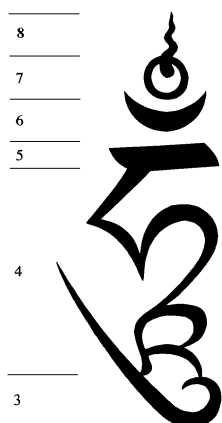
2. Yamantaka begins to melt from the upper and lower parts of the body, like the breath on a mirror surface. Ultimately, everything dissolves into light and the only thing left is your letter

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<sup>160</sup> Also see the questions at pg.88. For the three-kaya practice here on the basis of Yamantaka also see: Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 58-59.



HUM. This letter HUM that is left is the basis of your consciousness, the ground on which your consciousness remains. The sign that the water element quits is a **feeling of smoke**.



3. The letter HUM now dissolves. The U dissolves into the body of the letter HA. The sign that the fire-element is quitting is that in the smoky type of experience you begin to see **fire sparks**.

4. The HA-body dissolves into the upper part of the H, the HA-head. The sign that the air-element dissolves into the consciousness is the **reflection of light**. (It is not that you are looking at light, but when there is light in the room you get some kind of light-reflection; that is the sign.) At this point the external, gross elements have dissolved.

5. The HA-head dissolves into the crescent moon. Now, within the air, subliminally, the internal subtle elements start dissolving and you get some kind of **whitish feeling**, like the effect of moonlight at night.

6. The crescent moon dissolves into the drop or circle. The sign is the **reddish feeling**, like from the evening sky.

7. The drop dissolves into the squiggle or *nada*. This is the last stage of the so-called ‘this life’. The sign is darkness, you experience **dark light**.

8. Finally the nada dissolves into a tiny little point, like the end of the squiggle, and then dissolves. When the darkness goes and the squiggle dissolves, there is no sign of either whitish, reddish, or even darkness left. It is almost like an early morning autumn day’s moonlight reflection, which we call the **clear light of death**.

So, this process corresponds with the experiences during the dying stage. If you can’t synchronize it completely, it doesn’t really matter, you imagine certain portions dissolving at each stage. You go through the experience of dissolving the four elements and the whitish, reddish and black experience. If you have difficulties visualizing the Tibetan letter HUM, you can use the English seed syllable, dividing the dissolving into the necessary stages.<sup>161</sup>

When finally everything has disappeared, you acknowledge, “This is the *clear light* of emptiness.” You may meditate on that, concentrate on that, focus on it for a little while.

Then it is time for you to say: OM SVABHAVA SHUDDHAH SARWA DHARMAH SVABHAVA SHUDDHO HAM – all is empty. You say this mantra, and in your visualization you hold that empty *clear light*.

### *Meditating on Emptiness*<sup>162</sup>

Now the next is difficult for us.

You put your main focus on the *clear light* and without losing your focus on that emptiness, in some corner of the mind you begin to acknowledge, “I am meditating on clear light, and I am working for Buddhahood, I am trying to achieve Buddhahood. I am meditating.” You have to recognize how your mind is thinking, “I am doing this.”

Then, “How is this thinking happening? Where am I, focusing and saying that I am meditating on clear light? What kind of *me* is perceiving? It is sort of in there, it is me who is doing it.” If you work at it, you’ll get these thoughts, you’ll see it.

When you begin to see what kind of *me* is observing, what *me* is meditating, don’t be modest, saying, “Who am I to do this?” Don’t go that way, because then you run away. Have a little pride and say, “I am meditating, I am working for enlightenment.” And when you have that little *I*, try to hold it. If you are too modest, that *I* escapes, and that is a problem. Don’t let it escape. Acknowledge, “I am meditating, I am practicing clear light here.”

<sup>161</sup> Also see: Dagab Rinpoche and Regine Leisner, *Das Sechsfache Guru-Yoga*, p. 71-73.

<sup>162</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light of Bliss*, p. 167-178.

But who is that *me*? What is it? What is the object *me*? And what are the aspects of that *me*?  
And what is the experience of that *me*?

These are the questions you have to raise. When you ask yourself these questions, you'll probably see no aspects and no focus, from whatever angle you look. In our normal condition we sort of see it is there, the big *I*; normally we don't see that it is *not* there.

You must try to catch that *I* rather than modifying it or letting it run away. When you begin to get hold of that *I*, which is meditating on clear light and working for enlightenment, that *I* in "I am here working for enlightenment, it is me here," you have an important point, one of the most important points, point number one: the recognition of the *I*. This is actually the point which you have to refute; that is the point of refutation.

When you begin to find that *me* or *I* while focusing on clear light, you find what Changkya Rolpai Dorje calls: 'a kind of huge lump'.

In *Mahamudra* they call it *benbun*, something you really cannot catch, like a cloud or something. This is a point; we begin to find it, instead of merely playing with words like selflessness, I-lessness, emptiness, which give you nothing to pinpoint.

When you perceive that sort of 'lump', recognize it and leave it there.

Be careful, it is very fragile; you don't want to destroy it right now, because you have to learn *how* it is not there. When you really search a lot, you'll lose it; search for it tenderly, gently. If you keep on looking for it too vigorously, it is very hard to catch it. Here we talk about the meditating *I*, "I the meditator".

Pabongka approached this from a different angle, when he said in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* that when somebody calls you a thief in the middle of thirty or forty people and you say, "Who, me?!" you catch the *I*, that *me* that cannot stand to be called a thief in public. Pabongka used that method, but in this particular teaching they use "I the meditator". I think "I the thief" is easier to catch than "I the meditator", because the first one really hurts your ego badly.

Another method according to the tradition is to stand at the edge of a high cliff and think, "Oh, I am going to fall!" That is another point where you can catch it. Normally, the object of refutation is pervasive and you can't really catch it. When you can't catch it, you can't do anything about it; being pervasive is its hiding place.

So, recognize the "I the meditator". Once you have that 'lump' or 'cloud', once you see it, where is it? Our identification is the physical appearance, [or rather] the five skandhas. But when I look at my five skandhas, which one is me?

I heard a joke. One day some people came from Tibet to Dharamsala. Among them was a woman who went into trance all the time. One day, while in trance, she ran to His Holiness and His Holiness asked, "Who are you?" She said, "I am Trishana," which means 'five sisters'. And His Holiness said, "Yes, but out of Trishana, which sister are you?" As she had no idea, she came out of the trance and fell down. She was pretending. The point is, when you can't pinpoint it, you disappear. You have to pinpoint which skandha it is, but you cannot really.

If it is form, then the other skandhas are left out, so it is not form. Besides that, form will disappear when you die, and are you going to disappear? No. Likewise, each one of the skandhas is seen to be separate from that *I*.

You will see that clearly with your intelligent mind; no problem. So, if the *I* is not one with form, is it then separate from form? Then we are back to the same old beginning, "*Where* are you?" That is again back to zero. If it is not one with the skandhas, it must be separate; if it is separate, where are you? Do you get that?

Maybe you will say, "I am separate from the skandhas." Then you would have no connection with form at all.

Basically, there is no place where it really is, no point where you can hold or find that fragile something. If you don't think about it, the ego is there, the *I*, that boss, that big one inside, who is always afraid of getting hurt, always concerned about being protected. When you carefully look for

where it is inside, whether with or without form, one with form or separate from form, then, whatever you do, you're not really going to find it. The more you analyze, the more you dig or poke in, the more it disappears, like this fake lady in trance, and the more you have no basis to find it.

When you reach this level, you also should not forget, you have to go according to the Tibetan saying, "Put barley powder in the mouth and play the flute, together." You have to do that, since saying, "There is nothing there" will not do either.

At the same time you have to remember that you yourself are in the form of Yamantaka, melted, and are experiencing joy, great emptiness, great void. What is void? When you dissolve everything, you are get a huge freedom. That void is really freedom, tremendous relief and relaxation, free nature with a lot of joy. One cannot forget that joy.

In order to establish that great freedom, that great void, the obstacle you have to overcome is the existence of *my* and *me*. So you really have to see what and where that *I* is. Take whatever identification you can find of that big ego and see where it belongs, what it is. Does it have a physical appearance? Can it be touched? Be felt? Is it there? It is not there. It is not there, because there is no real big independent ego; it exists collectively, dependently. There is no such thing as an *I*, a big ego that is so worried about getting hurt; it is not there. We simply function collectively, as the combination of the collection of body and the collection of mind; on that ground we function. The point is to recognize this, and not to have that obstacle, that big block, of ego. Once that is removed, it is the real freedom, the real void.

For this, the traditional teachings are wonderful, but also you have to go a little bit according to your own personal way of analyzing and understanding. You don't necessarily have to follow these four points<sup>163</sup> of oneness or separateness, if oneness there are millions of it and if separateness there is no connection, all these arguments and counter-arguments. All these are useful and if it serves the purpose in your meditation, apply it; if this doesn't serve the purpose, use whatever works for you. The purpose here is to destroy that source of fear, that source of suffering, the big ego.

So use whatever works for you, but make sure it doesn't backfire on you. As long as you don't get backfired, you can go on teasing it. Send teasers to that ego. But first you have to catch it!<sup>164</sup> Don't let it hide in possessiveness, because then you can't do anything. And also, when you have caught it, if you try to look at it too much, it will run away. Chankya Rolpai Dorje said:

If you try to see the face of the Mother too well, the old lady Mother will run away.<sup>165</sup>

The face of the mother is referring to the void here. These were the points for meditating on emptiness.

The way and how you work? Applying the traditional way of logic is one method. You can also work experientially. If your way is to work by trying to feel, to experience it, absolutely do that! Apply whatever is working for you; the main point is the object to be refuted, which is ego. Whatever works to get that out of your system, should be applied. Make sure you don't get backfired; if you get backfired, it is difficult to correct.

By applying these analytical ideas you really try to find out, to pinpoint, search, nail down, that ego. Then you find you cannot. When you cannot nail it down, it is not that you are not capable of nailing it down, it is because it is not there. You lose the point all the time, like a fish in the water that you cannot catch. It is worse than a fish in the water. You cannot pin it down. It is not our fault; it is not our incapability, it is because it is not there. Get it?

It is not there, but we think it is there. It is our dualistic, deluded feeling that is governing us, that has been governing us life after life. That is the source of all our misery. So in order to prove to ourselves that it is not there, we have to nail it down, or try to nail it down. And when you cannot nail it down, it is not your fault, because in reality it is not there.

<sup>163</sup> Also see page 81. Literature: Pabongka, *Liberation in the Palm of your Hand*, p. 683-697; Pabongka, *Liberation in Our Hand*, vol. III, p. 274-290; Geshe Rabten, *Treasury of Dharma*, p. 211-233; Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, *Tibetan Tradition of Mental Development*, p. 164-174; Geshe Rabten, *Essential Nectar*, p. 165-168; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Joyful Path of Good Fortune*, p. 526-541.

<sup>164</sup> The object of negation or refutation.

<sup>165</sup> Chankya Rolpai Dorje, *Discovery of Mother Functioning Voidness*, in: R. Thurman, *Essential Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 209. Also see Pabongka, *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, p. 689.

You have to be intelligent enough to convince yourself, “I searched through my body, I searched through my mind, I searched in every corner of my existence and couldn’t find it, so it is not there!” Be able to convince yourself!

Pabongka gave the example of searching for your mule. You think it is in the corner of a particular shed with some other animals, so you find a goat and take it out, you find a sheep and take it out, you find a horse and take it out, and if then finally you find out the shed has no more animals in it, then you are convinced your mule is not there.

You have to convince yourself like that. Not to prove it to the outside world, but to prove to yourself that within you that huge, terrifying ego we are so worried about, is really not there!! True. And once you are really convinced of that, you are moving in the right direction. You have that conviction when you really feel, “It is not there really; it is only there as a collectively functioning existing I, there is no independent I.” This is not quite correct but let me use it. An independent ego is not there; it is all dependent existence.

That will help to cut tremendously our source of problems, to cut the fear even in everyday life. This is not going to substitute your Dharmakaya, no way! Forget it. But still it will give you a tremendous source of comfort and it will cut down a lot of fears and problems.

When you have lost that big thing that you have been cherishing so long, the *I*, the ego that is always afraid of getting hurt, afraid of getting disgraced, always hoping to be wonderful, wanting to be the king of kings, the lord of lords, when that is gone, when it is not there anymore, you definitely feel that void, that emptiness, that empty space, and that is freedom! That is no loss! We are freed from any point of suffering. It is like a sore, a boil, that has finally burst.

Because it is a big freedom, that void automatically gives you joy, a big release. It is like when you have accomplished a very big responsibility; afterwards you feel relieved. It is as if you had a relative who was totally unable to function, paralyzed, who had been in a vegetable state for a long time with no hope of getting better; when finally he dies, you feel sad because of the loss, but at the same time you feel relieved. You get this sort of feeling. Inside, you have achieved the revolution of overthrowing the big boss ego. If you don’t enjoy that, what else can you enjoy?

Don’t leave that joy there at that level. It needs a little spice; to have a good taste you need the bliss in there. You must experience a combination of bliss and void in your mindstream. Hold together that incredible relief and that void. Enjoy sitting on that.

Now you question again, “This combination of bliss-nature joy and void, which I call *Dharmakaya*, which I think I am witnessing, which I think I am experiencing, how am I experiencing it, how am I witnessing this?”

When you very carefully begin to look, again it looks like an overwhelming thing within you. You are overwhelmed by that bliss and that void combined. When you look at it, again it seems to be sort of independently standing there. Just because you refuted the ego, you have that void, and this is, again, standing independently there.

How is it independently standing? You see that from the suffering angle there is no independent standing; and from the joy angle there is no independent standing. You have to look from both angles, from the positive as well as from the negative angle. From all angles, wherever you look, there is *nothing* really standing independently. At this point, you probably almost have to say, “I am experiencing it, I am feeling it, but it does not truly exist independently at all.” When you get that point along with the joy, you recognize that the joy also does not exist independently, it is void, too! This sort of feeling of joy nature you may acknowledge as *Dharmakaya*.

This probably will give you a little better picture of *Dharmakaya*. If you keep on meditating on this, trying to bring about that *clear light* through a meditative state, then, when you actually die and those symptoms naturally come you will recognize them for what they are. In the meditative state the clear light state is imaginatively built up, and when you really die you get that meditative clear light and the big void or actual clear light combined together. This is called the combination of **son clear light** and **mother clear light**. The mother clear light is the naturally occurring process of the void that comes at death

and the meditatively built up clear light is the son-like clear light or the child-like clear light. When they meet together it is called *ösel mabu thobe*, ‘mother and son clear light meet face to face’.

When some advanced practitioners have remained in a meditative state for a number of hours or days after what we call death, it means they have remained in the state that recognizes of the combination of the son clear light and the mother clear light, which is the actual *Dharmakaya*, which is the actual bliss, which is the actual emptiness.

The moment you say *De chen.....la ma lha* ‘From the state of great bliss.....’ you have to have all this, remember all this. That is what is meant by saying that for the advanced people it goes easily, while for us it takes time to go through.

The meeting of the *son clear light* and *mother clear light* was one of the most important practices of the great Marpa Lotsawa, the founder of the Kagyu tradition. This is considered one of the most important of the many important points that he has shared.

## 2. Transforming Bardo into Sambhogakaya

What I’m going to teach you here is slightly different from what is usually taught in the sadhanas. In the sadhanas we usually say to visualize yourself in the form of the Yidam and then gradually dissolve your body from the lower and upper parts. When it disappears, you focus on emptiness. We don’t go backwards through the stages in reverse order. We normally don’t talk about that, so this is one of the important points here.

Remaining in the *Dharmakaya* is not enough. You also have to rise in *Sambhogakaya* form. In the *Dharmakaya* you see nothing, it is a very vague energy level where is no physical appearance, no physical movements, *etc.* Since this is not enough to help all sentient beings, you need to rise in a physical form, and therefore you rise as *Sambhogakaya*. Rising in the *Sambhogakaya* is also training in how to change your bardo into *Sambhogakaya*. So, again, as earlier with the *Dharmakaya*, you have to recognize this process.

We said earlier that ordinary death is the stage on which we practice, we call it the **base**. What you meditate and develop we call the **path** and what you actualize, becoming a full Buddha, we call **result**. So, the basis on which we practice, how we practice and what we get, we call base, path and result. The first basis on which you practice is ordinary death; how you practice is going through the stages of the dying process, also bringing in the bliss, acknowledging that as *Dharmakaya*, recognizing emptiness, bringing the joy within that, holding that as ultimate result and so on as described above; and what you hope to get out of it, is to become fully enlightened, a Buddha.

Here it is the same thing: the base on which you are going to train is the ordinary bardo; how you are going to train is rising as *Sambhogakaya*; and what you hope to achieve is to become a true *Sambhogakaya*. These are, again, the three main points, and the recognition of these three is very important. How do you meditate here?

When I finally reach at the stage of death – forget about death as *Dharmakaya* for a little while – when I am separated from my present body, I start running, just running, going nowhere, just aimlessly roaming here, there, everywhere.

Do you have any idea how the bardo works? One of the great Indian saints and scholars, Vasubandhu, the half-brother of Asanga, introduced the *Abidharmakosha*, a Buddhist metaphysical text. In that is said:

A bardowa does not look like the being’s appearance in the previous life; it will look like the way it will appear in the future life at the youthful age of around thirteen.... Bardowas have a tremendous karmic power in the sense that they can go wherever they want to go, wherever they think of going.

The simple reason for is that their body is not a physical but a mental or astral body. Physical forces do not apply to it, because there is nothing physical to apply force to. If they think of New York, they are there, they don’t have to drag their body there. That is why they are called powerful. Mind has no limitations, so from the top of samsara to the bottom of samsara, wherever they think of, they go<sup>166</sup>. That is why it is constant movement, they can’t stay in one place. They can go everywhere, with the exception of three or four places. The basic description of a bardowa is:

<sup>166</sup> Comparable to how we go from place to place in our dreams.

They have all five senses and nothing stops them; they go through walls and everything.

Is the bardo free and nice and enjoyable? Not necessarily. It is full of suffering and fear; all experiences are so intense that you become completely scared. The bardo is extremely frightening, you can't even properly walk in there, it is terrifying. One simple reason is you can't even go to your own home. If you go to your house, your friends will be worrying, mourning your death and no matter how much you say, shout, or scream, you are totally helpless, they cannot hear you. Only a few psychics may be able to sense you, but if you try to tell them something, ninety percent of the time they get a crooked message anyway.

So you feel miserable and even afraid of going into your own house. You are afraid of everything and of every single being. If, in normal daily life, you have some kind of little mental difficulty, like a few people acting slightly different towards you, you get afraid and think, "Maybe I can't face it, maybe I can't do this, maybe people think of me this and that." This is nothing compared with what bardo people feel, the suffering and paranoia they go through.

In addition to that their elements are totally upside down, therefore there are tremendously fearful sounds as if mountains are collapsing, the whole world is burning, the whole world is being carried away by a huge flood, and there is a tremendous amount of wind and storm. You have no idea where you are going to end up. All this is experienced in the bardo period.<sup>167</sup> So,

When I die I am bound to go through this bardo and have these experiences. When my friends die, they are also bound to have these terrible, suffering experiences. From now on, I would like to end that completely. I don't want to have to go through it myself, nor do I want those sentient beings I care for to go through it. Therefore, I want to take advantage of this opportunity and change my bardo, transform my bardo into a *Sambhogakaya*.

When I decide I would like to do this, the question rises: how? At the moment I enter the bardo stage, I need to change into the two illusion bodies, the impure and pure illusion body.

How you get your illusion body? First, you dissolve yourself completely into the nature of emptiness and acknowledge yourself as Dharmakaya. Then, the whole procedure of imagining or going through the stages of dying has to be reversed: from the state of clear light you go into the darkness or the black appearance, then into the reddish appearance, into the whitish appearance, then the rebuilding of the elements, air, fire, water and earth, with the appearances of candlelight, fire sparks, smokiness and mirage, to the level of whatever bardo you have.<sup>168</sup>

How am I going to do this? Well, since I have decided to cut off this ordinary bardo and to try to develop the extraordinary *Sambhogakaya*, I say:

I am going to obtain that extraordinary state, I am going to work for that. I am going to get it, but, the person who wants to do this, the object I am going to get, and how I am going to achieve it, how does all of that exist within me? When I look at it, I have the willingness, I want to do it, I am going to get it, but still none of this has independent existence. The motivation, the work, and the result are all interdependent, they are dependent arisings, they have no independent existence.

Keep thinking about that for a little while. Neither the thought, nor the act you are going to do, nor the result you are going to get are independently existing.

While thinking that, within that thought, you suddenly arise in the form of Manjushri. In these teachings here they give you either Yamantaka with one face and two hands, or in the case of Heruka the *nada*, or in the case of Guhyasamaja as *dang pö gön po*, 'the First Lord', referring to the primordial Buddha. We are very familiar with Manjushri as *Sambhogakaya*, so let us go that way.<sup>169</sup>

Suddenly you rise in the form of Manjushri. From the body of Manjushri light radiates and fills up the whole universe, purifying it and transforming it into a pure land. Concentrate and focus on that for a little while.

<sup>167</sup> Gehlek Rimpoche, *Lam Rim Teachings*, Chapter on Death; R. Thurman, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, p. 169-174.

<sup>168</sup> Ordinary bardo of one of the six realms, impure illusion body or pure illusion body. Useful chart of correlations: D. Cozort, *Highest Yoga Tantra*, p. 105.

<sup>169</sup> Also see: Dalai Lama, *Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 53 and p. 59.

While focusing on acknowledging yourself as Manjushri and on the activity of purifying and transforming, a side-mind picks up and begins to analyze, “Hey, I am concentrating on myself as Manjushri. How do I perceive that Manjushri? How am I focusing on Manjushri? All right, I am seeing myself as Manjushri, this is fine, but how am I perceiving it? I am perceiving it as Manjushri, it is there, it is me.”

That is how we are perceiving an independent Manjushri. We are not thinking of Manjushri as dependent arising, we sort of just get that Manjushri there, perceiving it as independent. Now the same four point procedure comes in:

1. Recognizing the object to be refuted.
2. If it exists, it has to exist as either oneness with or separate from my body and mind, there is no third alternative.
3. If Manjushri is there, how does it exist, is it identical with my mind and body?
4. Separate from my body and mind?

Apply these four points again. After that you recognize that the way and manner in which you perceive Manjushri is not right, it is mistaken, you are simply grasping a Manjushri and holding it, saying, “This is Manjushri, this is me.” You grasp at it and that is how you perceive an independent Manjushri, an independent *Sambhogakaya*. That way of recognizing is mistaken. When you observe it carefully, asking, “Is it part of my body, is it part of my mind, identical with or separate from them?” you will clearly see it is neither one with them nor separate from them, and therefore, the way we recognize or acknowledge it as independent is wrong.

Then how to recognize it? You will recognize a dependently arising Manjushri. Dependent arising means something that cannot stand or exist by itself without depending on other factors. Pabongka used to give the example of a walking stick: people depend on a walking stick because they cannot stand by themselves. Dependent existence and independent existence are mutually exclusive. You determined that an independent Manjushri was wrong, so now you acknowledge a dependently existing Manjushri.

You hold that there is no independently existing Manjushri and at the same time you acknowledge a dependent existing Manjushri; you hold or remember these two together. While you are trying to do so, occasionally the independent appearance will pop up, occasionally the dependent arising will pop up, and occasionally what you think is the *Sambhogakaya* pops up in your mind. All of this has to be within one mind, if possible simultaneously, otherwise alternating the different ways of perceiving. This is probably how we can handle what is called *sab sel nyi mei kyi neljor* the combination of profound and clear yoga.<sup>170</sup> You see that term in many places, described as, “you can see it, but there is no true existence within it.” However, that is not really comprehensible for our level of mind at this moment. At our level, we cannot really comprehend the combination of appearance as existence and its nature of emptiness. We talk about it, read about it, the teachers will tell you, but in practice I don’t think we can do it together.

A profound and clear dualistic yoga is comprehensible for us. We are capable of handling that much and it serves the purpose. This is a very, very important point. Also, you acknowledge that as enjoyment body, *Sambhogakaya*.

When changing to the *sambhogakaya* all eight stages of dissolving that are within the *dharmakaya* process, you meditate again, forward. The process is supposed to happen exactly the reverse way and at the end of that you’re supposed to get a form, maybe a mental form: the *bardo* body which here we call *sambhogakaya*: *bardo* as *sambhogakaya*. That is how the *bardo* can be transformed: reversing the stages of dying, you yourself coming into existence in *Sambhogakaya* form. In the *Yamantaka* sadhana, it says that in the middle of the mandala you, as Manjushri, just ... ‘pop!’

Audience: And from *sambhogakaya* to *nirmanakaya* it happens again?

Rinpoche: From *sambhogakaya* to *nirmanakaya* I don’t believe you have to follow those eight steps. There are different ways of doing, like e.g. developing the *nirmanakaya* through the five wisdoms.

Audience: What is the dependent Manjushri depending on? And what is the cause?

Rinpoche: Well, if you are not there, where is this Manjushri going to be?

<sup>170</sup> See Gehlek Rinpoche, *Healing and Self-Healing Through White Tara*, ch. VII point 6.

Audience: Depending on my Sambhogakaya?

Rinpoche: Depending on your body, mind, everything. This is the question how am I going to do this? Well, since I have decided to cut out this ordinary bardo and try to develop the extraordinary Sambhogakaya, I say *my* Sambhogakaya. I am not bringing in an enlightened Manjushri, claiming that Manjushri depends on me, is under my thumb, under my control. I am not saying that. It is *my* Sambhogakaya Manjushri, it depends on my body, my mind, my existence, my functioning. That is how *my* Manjushri comes into being. I am glad you raised that question. I am sure a lot of people are thinking that way.

Audience: You still have your ‘lump’ then.

Rinpoche: Yea, this time that ‘lump’ is Manjushri.

So, in every point, in every point of the dying stages, in every point of the Sambhogakaya stage, in every point of the Nirmanakaya stage you bring wisdom in, bring emptiness in. You not only acknowledge the existence that appears, you also bring the wisdom of emptiness in. This is an important point. These kinds of teachings come out of the *Lama Chöpa*, they don’t normally come in the sadhanas.

*Being careful on what information goes where.* Also, we have to be careful. In case some of you, in the future, are going to teach this to others, you cannot pick up every bit of information you read somewhere and bring it up and dump it in one point. That will not work. One, it is not allowed. Two, it doesn’t help the individual. Three, it will not go according to the individual’s development. Each practice carries certain bits of differences in the teaching. After the teaching, when you have assimilated this information, probably in your practice you will be able to combine the sadhana and the *Lama Chöpa* together; things like that you may be able to do. But you cannot pick up information from there and bring it in on every single thing; it is not permitted and it is not helpful. I like to say this, because in the West you read some information and collect and dump it everywhere. That is, I think, going to be a problem in the future. You have to be a little careful on that.

### 3. *Transforming Rebirth into Nirmanakaya*

Your Sambhogakaya will not remain as Sambhogakaya. You have to rise as a manifestation body or Nirmanakaya. Naturally, again the basis we use is ordinary birth, the path is the practice of taking rebirth, and the result is the enlightened manifestation body. Again, base, path, and result. I hope you recognize that by now.

Now the compassion part of it. When I become a bardowa I run everywhere, helplessly, hopelessly, meeting with all sorts of difficult and fearful obstacles. Now according to the Tibetan Buddhist tradition:

Suddenly I am sort of pushed by my karma to take rebirth; let us presume a human rebirth. My karma forces me to go near the parents, who are in ‘active sleep’. By seeing that my attachment rises, and I am sort of forced to participate in that, I can’t help it. And whatever you are going to be, male or female, you have an attachment to the opposite sex. So I want to participate and I jump in, but I can see nothing but the sex organs. I am hopelessly, helplessly stuck in there. So I get angry, and because of that anger and because of the very fragile nature of my body, I die as a bardowa and take rebirth there. My consciousness enters the combination of semen and egg, I am caught in it, I don’t know what is going on.

Suddenly the developmental stages of the fetus start; the semen-and-egg combination becomes thicker and thicker, the head grows, limbs emerge, and so forth.

When the time is over to stay inside, it is impossible to stay in the womb, and I try to get out, which is really difficult. Birth is not going to be that easy, but very painful and difficult.

After I am born, again there are the delusions and that fearful boss ego. Again, I meet with the delusions and sufferings we experience in life. Again I am born in that, making myself again the basis for those experiences, good, bad, and particularly for the worse and more difficult ones. This is how we repeat the whole thing. That is my pain, my problem, and I don’t want to do that again. Nor do I want that for the persons I care about. I want to stop that constantly revolving, vicious circle. I would like to cut that. Where and how can I do it? I would like that Sambhogakaya state of being to come out as Nirmanakaya.



That is how you make up your mind. Then:

In Manjushri form, you meditate a letter OM at your crown, a letter AH on your throat, a letter HUM on your heart, representing the body, speech and mind of all enlightened beings. You generate a tremendous amount of light from your body as Manjushri and in particular from those three letters.<sup>171</sup>

On the tips of the light rays you have generated, you start manifesting different Yidams, different beings. And different activities are carried out by the tips of the light rays.

Focus on that: you yourself with the three letters, generating a tremendous amount of light and on the tips of the light rays a lot of manifestations are talking to the people, guiding them, helping them. Whatever can be done as service to beings, all kinds of services needed, you accomplish in that way.

Again, recognize that this is not independent. Again, these manifestations, these beings are dependently arisings and you yourself are also. You acknowledge these manifestations as Nirmanakaya.

If you want to go into a little more detail, in the sadhana you find the generation of the elements, the protection realms, the mandala and within the mandala the different Yidams, like you yourself totally in the form of Yamantaka with nine faces, sixteen legs and thirty-four hands, and also with the three kayas: at your heart level the wisdom being, at its heart the concentration being, and you yourself physically are the commitment being. In addition, there are deities in your eyes, and so forth: in the case of the ‘Yamantaka Thirteen Deities’ you really put deities there, in the case of the ‘Solitary Hero Yamantaka’, the deities are represented by syllables.

That is it. We take our ordinary life that we experience and we will have to experience over and over, the living part, the dying part, the rebirth part of it, and try to practice transforming them and making extraordinary life, extraordinary death, extraordinary rebirth; that is called three-kaya practice. As simple as that. Here it says:

This is the real essence of the Buddha’s quick way of accomplishment,  
Nagarjuna’s practice and what Tsongkhapa has shared with us.

It is to show you to go deeper, to dig more, to study deeper, get a deeper understanding and then get yourself to function on the basis of your understanding. The essence of the development stage in Vajrayana is the generation of the three kayas. That together with its practical applications we have covered. So, you now have the real essence of both sutra and tantra packed in your bags.

With all this you start the verse: *From the great bliss I arise as the Guru-Deity.*



#### 4. Blessing of the Offerings<sup>172</sup>

st. 6. OM AH HUM! OM AH HUM! OM AH HUM!

*ngo wo ye she la nam par nang chö dhang chö dzey  
so sö nam pa je lay wang po druk gi chö yül dhu  
dhe tong gi ye she khye par chen kay pay sa dhang  
bar nang nam khay kyon tham chay yong su khyap pay  
chi nang sang way chö trin dham dzay chen zih  
sam gyi mi kyap pay gang war gyur*

<sup>171</sup> See page 84.

<sup>172</sup> Taught extensively in the Yamantaka teachings. Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 70-73; Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 60-61.

**Nature pure  
Offerings appear  
Arousing bliss-void  
Filling space**

The Tibetan verse says, ‘Wisdom nature, appearing as inner offering or any other offering in the different offering forms, functioning to provide joy to the six senses, especially bringing bliss and void nature, together. The six senses should be able to grow with the bliss-void wisdom. Such offerings should fill all the ground and all the space.’ That is the blessing OM AH HUM.

Actually there are outer, inner, secret and suchness offerings, offerings for the Dharma protectors and even for the different little animals, *etc.*, all of these offerings are included and there is only the one blessing. I must point out that though you do use these words for blessing the inner offering, that does not mean that it is necessarily an inner offering. You use the same words to bless a tormo offering, and that is not an inner offering blessing. We borrow the same words to bless anything, anything you eat or drink.

OM AH HUM. To bless, you just use the three letters OM AH HUM. The syllable OM is made of the three sounds A – O – U – M. This OM itself represents body, speech and mind of all enlightened beings and body, speech and mind of ourselves.<sup>173</sup>

AH is the source of all sound. Mantras and yantras all are sound. The ground, the foundation of all sound is AH. In essence it means that AH is the life of all mantra, the result of all mantra is the five Dhyani Buddha development. AH is the essence of emptiness. In the Manjushri root tantra, the *Manjushri Namagamiti*<sup>174</sup>, is mentioned:

AH is the essence of all syllables, letters or sound.

It is the most important reality – the absolute reality – of letters, syllables or sound.

It is the internal sound. It has no growth; it has no death.

HUNG has a lot of explanations. In one way of explaining it represents union. In another way there are five stages involved. That is if you break up the letter HUNG into five parts, including crescent moon, dot and squiggle. These five parts represent the five Dhyani Buddhas. So just the simple letter HUNG represents the five Buddhas.

OM AH HUNG is very important. Everybody knows it. Most people don’t know what it means. Because of that OM AH HUNG is always used for blessing, for protection, for everything. In my case, I am a lama who has received very few initiations. There are a number of others who have received so many. But even for me, there is a tremendous amount of commitments of so many things. There is no way I can follow it up. The only way I can keep them is by saying OM AH HUNG a hundred times a day. Of course I do the usual sadhanas, but in addition to that there are three hundred sadhanas I can’t do. I substitute them all with OM AH HUNG.

### *Visualization*

Above the offerings you visualize the three letters emitting light. OM is normally white, AH is normally red and HUM is normally blue.

The white letter OM brings all the blessings of the body, either in the form of white **Vairochana** or his hand implements such as the wheel. Dissolving these into the offerings is the body-way of blessing. OM itself is divided into three letters A-U-M, which represent body, speech and mind of the pure beings.

The red letter AH brings the blessings of the speech in form of red **Amitabha** or his hand implement, the lotus.

The blue HUM brings the blessings of the mind in the form of blue **Akshobya** or his hand implements, bell and vajra.

<sup>173</sup> More explanation on OM in Gehlek Rimpoche, *Six-session Guru yoga*, edition 2003.

<sup>174</sup> English translation: Alex Wayman, *Chanting the Names of Manjushri*. Quotation not [yet] found.

All these dissolve to the three letters.

HUM is union: union between form and sound, union between male and female, union between clear light and illusory body, union between body and mind, union between ourselves and enlightened beings. The ultimate union is HUM. Out of the five wisdoms, HUM is the seed syllable of the *dharmadhatu* wisdom, the wisdom of ultimate reality. Ultimate reality has no faults; it is faultless, so has no faults of color, smell, and potentiality. The HUM purifies the faults of color, smell, and whatever the purpose of the food is, nutrition,<sup>175</sup> because it is the seed-syllable of ultimate reality, primordial reality. This is the mind-way of blessing.

Bringing the body, speech, and mind blessings is bringing the body, speech, and mind Buddhas, Vairochana, Amitabha and Akshobya, or their hand implements. Vairochana is the Buddha of pure form. When our form becomes pure it becomes Buddha Vairochana. Amitabha, out of the five Buddhas, is the deity of nectar and the deity of nectar makes nectar.

If you can't visualize that, just think that the three letters radiate lights that bring back the blessings of the body, speech, and mind of all the Buddhas, dissolve them back to the three letters.

Then HUM falls down on the offerings and purifies all faults, whatever they may be. AH makes the offerings into nectar, and OM makes them inexhaustible.

When you say OM AH HUM that's what you should imagine.

What does that really do? There are three aspects.

*Nature pure.* It means that the nature of these offerings is pure. That refers to the absolute reality, which is emptiness, and again is wisdom. In reality there should not be any other offerings than those in the nature of bliss-void inseparable. Whatever it may be, it is made of bliss-void inseparable. If it is, for example, a food offering, the **nature** of the food is bliss-void inseparable. This point is difficult to understand. Once you have that, then the appearance of the offerings and the activity or function of the offerings is not a problem. The difficulty is the nature of reality, the bliss-void combined nature. That part is difficult.

*Offerings appear.* The **appearance** is whatever it is. It could be soup or coffee or whatever the offering is, flowers, fruit, water for the mouth, water for the feet, incense, light or whatever the offering may be, it appears in that manner. So, in appearance there are these different offerings.

*Arousing bliss void.* What is the **purpose** of these offerings? The **purpose** is to bring joy and happiness to those to whom you make the offering. What kind of joy do you want to bring? You want to bring the special combination of bliss and void, the union of bliss and emptiness. You want to bring that to them. These offerings are capable of arousing bliss-void in whomsoever you are making these offerings to.

When you have all these three together, it is okay, but if one of them is missing, it is not right. Any offering should include these three qualities and you bless it with OM AH HUM.

*Filling space.* There are no limitations to the amount of the offerings. The offerings fill up the space. Every open, empty place is filled up. That is Samantabhadra's offering. Now be careful. The Tibetan *Küntu Zangpo* is usually translated as 'Always Good', and translators take it for granted that it refers to the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra who multiplies offerings. But in Vajrayana *kün zang* refers to the union of bliss and emptiness and so does not refer to the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra. The offering is by nature the union of bliss and emptiness. By offering you want to remind them of the union of bliss and emptiness. By doing that I would like to develop the union of bliss and emptiness within myself. That is the *kün zang*.<sup>176</sup>

When you say that verse you just think of all the offerings. You don't have to say it from the mouth. If everything has to be spelled out all the time, you will have to recite the whole Kangyur and Tangyur. That is not going to work.

I have some doubts about the meaning of the English word 'blessing'. You could say 'purifying' or 'making it right'. Is there a big difference between the Christian understanding of blessing and what we

<sup>175</sup> Also see Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 61.

<sup>176</sup> Also see Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 79.

are doing here? The understanding I have of the normal English usage of the word ‘blessing’ is that something additional comes in from outside and that makes it a little better, or that something comes and touches me on the head.

Audience: In the Christian tradition a substance is transformed through blessing into a divine substance.

Rinpoche: So then it is right. That is the blessing of the offerings. And not only are the offerings transformed in that manner, but also made inexhaustible. It is a tremendous amount. Every open space on the ground or in the air is totally filled up. It is probably very hard to get through, you can’t even walk! We probably don’t have to worry about it, because it is only our imagination. That sort of imagination however, brings a lot of luck. It makes the individual lucky. If you are lucky, you get things done. If you are not lucky, you can’t get things done. Probably scientists will not agree, although they should. Luck is one of the components. If all the components are brought together, it will work. If one is missing, it won’t work, no matter which one it is or who it is or wherever they do it. Thurman calls that ‘inner science’. Maybe that is right.

Who blesses? Not an ordinary person, but you yourself inseparable from the lama and the Yidam. The process through which you bless everything is the usual Vajrayana process. The appearance you can see as in absolute reality, emptiness. So:

For blessing the inner [and other] offerings, you yourself are in the form of a deity. At your heart-level is a sun disc. On that sun disc are the people you care about the most, along with all sentient beings.

All obstacles and difficulties of their body, speech and mind, their negativities, illnesses, obstructions and even their bad dreams, you can remove from them and dissolve into the offering. Not only does everything dissolve into the nectar, it becomes of one taste.

One taste means nothing impure remains in it, it is all pure. This is one of the best methods for purifying negativities and also clearing obstacles in the tradition of the *Segyu* system. The *Ganden Lha Gyema* comes through the *Segyu* system, the *Lama Chöpa* comes through the *Ensa Nyingu* system. As *Ganden Lha Gyema* is mostly sutra path, whatever special they have on inner offering, is brought in here.

Not only that. Just doing the blessing of the inner offering nicely, even doing it once carefully, becomes a very important method to develop the completion stage. It really becomes one of the key points for the individual to develop the completion stage. The problem with us is that we look at the completion stage as something different, something other than the usual practice we do. That is our problem; actually, we don’t need to do anything unusual to get to the completion stage. Every practice has its special point; the blessing of the inner offering has as its very important point helping to develop the completion stage. It actually is the direct conditional cause for developing some points of the completion stage.

Not only that. Tasting the nectar is a tremendous help to your channels and energy to become worthwhile, to be able to use them the best way you want to. Because of that, Marpa Lotsawa, instead of giving an initiation when appropriate disciples came to him, gave them *chang* to drink, *chang* out of his inner offering. Marpa Lotsawa said, “My little drink I give you has no equivalent; it is far superior to a hundred different initiations given by the other lamas around here.” Marpa’s bragging is because of this. It is boasting and it is appropriate propaganda, too. He is showing an appropriate point, which is actually right.

We brought in the blessing of the offerings, but that doesn’t mean that when you say the *Lama Chöpa*, you have to do all of them. No, you don’t. The shorter way, the verse *Ngowo yeshela nampa.....*, will also do. There are a lot of things we have left out, but I don’t think the important essence was left out.

Actually, offering is in Sanskrit *puja*. What does *puja* mean? Translated into Tibetan it means: making the object to whom you offer, happy. That is actually what offering is, whether outer, inner or whatever offering. It is to make the object happy. In this case the recipients are fully enlightened beings, Lama Buddha Vajradhara, or Lama Yamantaka, Lama Vajrayogini, Lama Heruka, Lama Guhyasamaja, Lama Hevajra, or all enlightened beings.

What makes them happy? Not just giving them a handful of flowers, or burning irritating incense, not that. It is you blessing the offerings and generating a bliss-void nature, or at least pretending to experience a bliss-void nature. The bliss-void combination is the essence of Buddha's teaching, so when somebody tries to gain bliss-void within him or herself, at least imaginatively, naturally the Buddhas are happy. That happiness is the actual offering.

It is not the things you put out as offerings. That we do for accumulation of merit. The real point is the joy or happiness that the object to whom you offer will experience, because you try to gain the essence of Buddha's teachings, the combination of bliss and void. That is why we went round and round on the subject of emptiness and its joy nature. All of these attempts to bring them together, wanting and trying to develop, makes them happy. That is the real puja. Not the ritual you say, not the things you lay out.

That doesn't mean you should ignore the ritual, because that is accumulation of merit. Laying out things is accumulation of relative merit; the things you say, the mantras you chant, the meditations you do, is accumulation of absolute merit. That is what puja is all about. About the *tsoh* I will talk later.

With that we have covered blessing the offerings, which is the last of the preliminaries. After that we'll come to the actual practice. Any questions?

### *Questions and Answers*

#### *On the self-generation*

Audience: What is the practical difference between the *Sambhogakaya* and the *nirvana* experience of an Arhat?

Rinpoche: Ah, this is a very technical question, and I have to be very controversial. The *nirvana* experience of an Arhat has no great compassion, but they enjoy the freedom state. Now the controversial part is coming, which is the Mahayana viewpoint. We normally talk about the fear of *samsara* and the fear of *nirvana*. We also talk about the end of *samsara* and the end of *nirvana*. The problem in *nirvana* is - I can't say it but let me borrow that language- they are free of laziness yet there is some sort of special laziness. They do have compassion, but it is almost an attitude of "I don't care, I am out of it, I am out to lunch." They don't work, they don't do anything but just sit there.

From the Theravada point of view the thought is that when an Arhat dies, he disappears, vanishes completely. A Theravada sutra gives the example of candlelight; when the wax and the wick are completely gone the light will disappear. They see existence totally as suffering, nothing but suffering so they want to leave everything. When an Arhat with left-over suffering, dies, when the candle is finished, all will disappear, nothing left, totally free, total gone. Where? Who knows? The ultimate aim in the Theravada level is arhatship. Arhats are divided into two levels: with left-over and without left-over. Arhats with left-over are those that obtained arhat-level or *nirvana* while living, so still carrying the baggage and when you die the wax is finished, so the candle is gone, so Theravadins think. Buddhas and Bodhisattvas say, "Hey, this is not right, you can be there for a while, but you can't go on like that, you have to move." Then the Arhats will join in at the level of the seeing path, the third path, of the Mahayana.

There is a huge difference between the *Sambhogakaya* and *nirvana*; a stage difference. Technically the *nirvana* people are out to lunch. *Sambhogakaya* people are not out to lunch, they are moving towards beings to help them. Not only are they going to manifest the *Nirmanakaya*, but even in the *Sambhogakaya* level they are accessible, though in a very exclusive way.

Audience: When Manjushri came and taught Je Tsongkhapa, was Manjushri a *Sambhogakaya* manifestation or a *Nirmanakaya* manifestation?

Rinpoche: I believe, technically you have to say *Nirmanakaya*, but can we see it? No. We may be able to see it, but not now. That is why it is said that even if Buddha appeared today as a full-fledged Buddha, we would not be able to see him, even though he appeared as a *Nirmanakaya*.

Audience: According to Tsongkhapa there is no difference between an Arhat and an Arya-Bodhisattva in the emptiness-perceived; the difference is in the bliss. If there is no great compassion, then great bliss can't arise. If there is no great bliss it is meaningless to talk about attaining even a *Dharmakaya* body of a Buddha therefore there would be no *Sambhogakaya* body. Right? There would be no *Dharmakaya* or *Sambhogakaya*.

Rinpoche: Right. The point is that one emptiness serves the purpose for all. Once you see emptiness in one point, it works for all points. There is no difference between Sutrayana-emptiness and Vajrayana-emptiness. The difference is in the method. Even between Mahayana and Hinayana it is not the wisdom which makes the distinction; the distinction is made on the method. That is why bodhimind, bodhicitta or ultimate love and compassion, whatever we call it, is the doorway to Mahayana. Similarly between Sutra-Mahayana and Tantra-Mahayana the difference is not wisdom; it is the method, the method of the bliss. The distinction between sutra and tantra is the joy or bliss; not the wisdom. The union of the bliss and the void together is absolutely exclusive for Vajrayana.

Audience: When you generate yourself in the form of your own deity, usually Yamantaka in union with Vajra Zombini or Heruka in union with Vajrayogini, you said that you should generate red light from the secret place of the deity and consort.<sup>177</sup>

Rinpoche: Generating the red light is the *tummo*-part. Basically when you meditate the tummo you wear a sort of belt, called the meditation rope, which you wear across and you create six triangles out of the rope. I will save that for next year, because the preliminaries already took a long part.

Audience: When you were talking about purifying all the universe, the environments and the inhabitants, it sounded to me like red light was generated from the secret place and went to all the universes, and you said light also came also from the HUM at the heart.

Rinpoche: You can do both. If you can do it together, fine. If you can do it separately, in turn or alternating, fine. The red you normally generate from the navel part, is connected with the tummo, and the blue you generate from the heart, is normally used for inviting, gathering blessings and so forth.

Audience: If you generate as a solitary deity instead of with a consort, you just do the light generation from the heart then?

Rinpoche: The solitary hero Yamantaka has a companion, too. It is not really solitary, there is a companion, right? Yamantaka has five qualities,<sup>178</sup> that's why it is okay.

Audience: The question is whether red light and blue light both go to all the different places?

Rinpoche: Doesn't matter, anything can do.

Audience: (...)

Rinpoche: Profound and clear actually is simultaneously. What I was talking about is that in our mind I don't think we can do them simultaneously. What is applicable to us, what we are capable of doing, is the alternate popping up: recognizing the emptiness, acknowledging the emptiness and also seeing that you cannot find independent existence, and also popping up as the deity, popping up as joy; it just pops up..... pops up..... pops up. I don't think one mind can hold them together. That 'popping up' business can be called *sab sel nyi mei kyi neljor*, profound and clear yoga. We have to be satisfied with this, and gradually we try to bring them together. Otherwise, whatever the teachers and texts tell you, you will not be able to handle it. It is not only next to impossible; it is impossible for people at this moment. That is why. That is how it works.

Audience: (about the transformation of Sambhogakaya into Nirmanakaya.)

Rinpoche: You can apply here your knowledge, your information on the Yamantaka practice; that is okay. There is no difference. I am glad you asked that. You know *Lama Chöpa* should really have all three practices in it: Yamantaka, Heruka and Guhyasamaja, together. This does not mean bringing the full practice in. It is recommended to do the development stage in the Yamantaka-style, which is basically: from the emptiness, almost from the Dharmakaya, the generation of the four element mandalas, air, fire, water and earth, then the protection realms and onwards up to the full all-faces Yamantaka with the three beings, along with the deities on the eyes, ears, nose and all sense-organs. I think we mentioned that yesterday, too.

So, as generation stage the Yamantaka path; as completion stage the Guhyasamaja path and the offerings done in the Heruka style; that is what is recommended.

<sup>177</sup> For this and the following two questions see page 75.

<sup>178</sup> See page 25.

*On blessing the offerings*

Audience: How come that in Tibetan there are more syllables in this verse on blessing the offerings than in your version of the English translation?

Rinpoche: It is actually pretty much the same. The only thing you may be missing is that in our English version it does not spell out that there are outer, inner and secret offerings.

Audience: And the three qualities of the offerings also are not specifically mentioned.

Rinpoche: That is actually apparent from the verse. Each line stands for one of the qualities.

Audience: That may be apparent for you but it is not for many of us.

Rinpoche: That's why we explain that in the teachings. It is often better than to have convoluted sentences. As long as you can understand and visualize and as long as I know that the author's intention is clearly expressed I am happy with the translation.

Audience: Are these offerings naturally pure offerings or are we saying that these offerings are of pure nature?

Rinpoche: That is a good point. They are not naturally pure, but the quality of this offering, the nature of that, where it comes from, what it is made of – that is pure. The actual purification is through OM AH HUNG. I am not saying that for example, if I offer milk, that it is pure, because it doesn't have any chemicals in it, but that it has come out of the pure bliss-void nature.

Audience: If the first line says *Nature pure* – it is very good in a poetic sense but from its meaning it does not convey anything other than that nature itself is pure.

Rinpoche: That is why we give the teaching on that. So you know exactly what is involved. Otherwise, if you can write everything down exactly, you don't need a teaching. But then you have to write 120 volumes. That won't work. It is probably a difference in culture. In the West everything has to be specifically spelt out.

Audience: If even in the Tibetan original the words are metaphorical and flowering, why can't we translate that in the same way into English?

Rinpoche: That would be a literal translation, word by word. There would be no need to create another translation, because there are already a number of literal translations of the Lama Chöpa available. I am not willing to change my mind about this verse of translation and it stays. There has to be a little room to interpret this or that way.

Audience: It is great how you could formulate this verse in such pithy way, short and to the point. You cut through all the language and cut it down to its essence. Could the whole Lama Chöpa be done that way?

Rinpoche: That is what I was hoping and why I am saying that this version is not the final translation yet. So while we are going through the verses now, I am giving a word by word explanation, so hopefully we can develop a more pithy translation after that. My problem is that I don't have enough English language skills for that.

Audience: And our problem is that we don't have enough Tibetan language skills.

Rinpoche: True, hopefully the younger generation will be able to do it. But the Tibetan language is a dying language. It is going to die even within the Tibetan communities. They will still speak Tibetan, but it is going to be something else. It won't be very long, probably within the next fifty years.





### III

## GENERATING THE SUPREME FIELD OF MERIT

Do kindly generate the perfect motivation generally prescribed in the Lamrim teachings and listen to this great teaching of the *ganden nyingu* tradition, the Ganden Kagyu tradition of the whispered lineage that is given orally from one practitioner to another.

We are very fortunate to be able to meet with such a great teaching as this *Lama Chöpa*. The problem with us is only our own practice. Otherwise, the methods are there, either in simple or in elaborate form. The only problem is that we don't do the practice perfectly. Somehow laziness and other priorities overpower us. We really don't have to look anywhere else or try anything else. It is right in front of us, almost like a ready-made TV-dinner. That quality of the teaching, the practice, is right here, but somehow we fail to take advantage of it. In particular, the qualities we mentioned yesterday, the double quick results<sup>179</sup> we can achieve by using this practice, are all here.

### Actual practice

The actual practice has five parts:

1. Generating the Supreme Field of Merit.
2. Offering the Seven Limbs.
3. Making Requests.
4. Seeking Blessings.
5. Dissolving the Supreme Field of Merit.

Generating the Supreme Field of Merit has two outlines:

1. Generating the Commitment.
2. Dissolving the Wisdom.

### 1. Generating the Commitment Being

That has three:

1. Generating the Place.
2. Generating the Principal.
3. Generating the Retinue.

### Generating the Place<sup>180</sup>

How does one generate the place where one visualizes one's Lama? What sort of yoga or practice should one do and how often? How does one look at one's Guru as inseparable from Vajradhara? How does one generate the wisdom light from the figures of the Supreme Field of Merit and how does one dissolve the merit-field? These are the questions raised by Tsongkhapa in his famous work *dri ba lhak sam rab kar*. The answers to these questions were given two hundred years later by the First Panchen Lama Lozang Chögyen. He quoted one of the tantras called *Vajramala Abidhana*<sup>181</sup> that says,

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<sup>179</sup> See page 56.

<sup>180</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 77-80. Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 63-66.

<sup>181</sup> See note 33.

You can meditate the kind and compassionate Lama on your palm, or at the center of your heart, or at your forehead, or any part of your body. Wherever you meditate him, you will accumulate the transforming blessings of a thousand Buddhas.

In answer to the other questions, such as how to view the Guru as inseparable from Vajradhara and how to do the activities, Panchen Lozang Chögyen says, “I have written it down separately.” And what he has written separately is nothing but the *Lama Chöpa*. It tells you how to look at the Guru as inseparable from all enlightened beings, and even as more important than all enlightened beings. This teaching will tell you where to meditate the Supreme Field of Merit, how, and why.

Here it is recommended to generate the Supreme Field of Merit right in front of you. That is not an ordinary place, but a place of bliss-void nature. *Lha lam yang par* – that is sky or open space, the place where you are generating the Supreme Field of Merit. What is the Supreme Field of Merit? The ultimate Supreme Field of Merit is Lama Dorjechang, Lama Buddha Vajradhara; there is nothing beyond that. Where am I going to generate Lama Dorjechang? There are a number of different ways. You can generate the Lama on the ground, in the palm of your hand, in front, in the cemetery, *etcetera*.

In the Yamantaka sadhana, you generate Lama Dorjechang on the crown [of the front generation]. That means: you yourself as Solitary Hero radiate light from your heart, invite all enlightened beings with the Yamantaka-mandala and with the vajra master; and you generate the Lama on the head of that Yamantaka, between the two horns. Remember? That is one way. In the Heruka practice, you generate the Lama on the lion-throne in the cemetery. In a lot of practices you generate the Lama in your palm. That is where the name *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* comes from.

In this teaching itself, you will find meditations on your crown, in your heart, *etc.* But, at this moment, it is recommended to visualize your Guru in front of you, for the simple reason that it is easy to generate him there, and also, when you want to prostrate, you can reach there. You can guess how far. You don’t want to have it very far away, just far enough to give you room to do a full-length prostration, whether that is five foot six or six foot five.

The space you are generating in front of you is not an ordinary empty space. It is the EVAM-space of bliss-void nature, which is very open and completely wonderful. Not only is the space of bliss-void nature, you yourself, the practitioner’s mind, also are. Actually, the space is a manifestation or an extension of your own consciousness, of your own mind, which is in the nature of joy or bliss.

The practitioner should be enjoying the ‘kick’ of bliss and void. You should be joyful and high, not by chemical power but by meditative power. At least, you imagine that you are enjoying a very smooth mind, that you are comfortable and joyful. Within that nature, the space and you yourself are almost like water in water, meaning you cannot really separate yourself from the space. Maybe you have had that experience when you are very high. Water in water.

We talk a lot about bliss and void in this teaching. That is why the Dalai Lama’s book on the *Lama Chöpa* has the title *Union of Bliss and Emptiness*. I remember that a common friend of many of us once, during the Kalachakra teachings, said, “If I hear this ‘bliss-void’ one more time, I will throw up.”

So this space is the extension of our own mind, which is in the nature of joy or bliss. That bliss recognizes emptiness. Just recognizing emptiness alone is not that intense. If you recognize it with bliss, it is very intense. You know why? Bliss draws our total attention. That is why sexual activities are so powerful and draw your whole attention. People say it relaxes their minds and bodies. That is because of the bliss. The sexual bliss experience that we know is ordinary bliss. Those who have experienced the extraordinary bliss have said that there is no comparison whatsoever.

I have told you a number of times that Song Rinpoche said that the source of sexual bliss is somewhere around the kidneys and that extraordinary bliss comes right from the top down, so it is totally different. If the little joy we get from the sexual activities makes us look for it so much, and that just comes from the kidneys, you can imagine the great joy which comes right down from the crown to the sex organ and then reverses back! My god, we are talking something else here! This is the bliss we refer to, whether you like it or not. The simple reason we need it for the recognition of emptiness, is the power and intensity it brings. That is why the bliss-void combination is so important. Otherwise what is the big deal?

That is the *dhe tong yeer mey* – bliss-void inseparable. Here we recognize not only emptiness, but emptiness together with bliss. Not only is it combined, it has become inseparable. That makes it even more powerful. Can you see it? You not only have bliss, but it has become one with emptiness. It is very intense. In English, using the words ‘bliss-void inseparable’ does not really give you the message. The message behind that is about how intense, how deep it is. That’s why the bliss lasts a long time within the body, and the mind is concentrated single-pointedly. Naturally you can’t think of anything else. When you are in *that* state you are not going to say, “Excuse me, I just have to do something else,” and then come back to it.

So just the space alone, the environment where you are going to generate the objects, that environment itself is in that nature, not only the things in it. It is part of your consciousness, it is part of the bliss-void combination, and it is also not small. It is huge. In Tibetan, it says *lha lam*, that is ‘the birds’ road’ which is referring to space. Birds can only fly in open space. All that is referred to in the first line of this verse:

*dhe tong yeer mey lha lam yang par...*

st. 7. **In the space of bliss-void inseparable ..**

*Dhe tong yeer mey* is the bliss-void combination. The Tibetan simply says *bliss-void inseparable space*. The English says, *In the space of bliss-void inseparable*. Where does that bliss-void come from? It is actually our own mind. It is the mind that has grown simultaneous joy and such a joy recognizes emptiness. *Dhe* stands for *dhe wa*. This is my mind that simultaneously grows the nature of joy. Then comes *tong*. It means that this joy-natured mind recognizes the nature of emptiness. This is inseparable. The mind that is observing the object emptiness, and is inseparable from it, is like space – *lha lam yang par*. In the Tibetan they use poetry at this point. It is the space where the gods dwell. So I am looking at my mind which is a joyful mind.

The direct translation of *dhe wa* according to dictionaries, *etc*, is bliss. But there remains a question for the future generation to look at very carefully. The word ‘bliss’ really carries a different meaning than simply great joy. Bliss gives you something more physically intense. There is this feeling of electricity. Joy is not necessarily a short-lived, shaky, extreme ecstasy. That is my feeling. I am not the person to say it because I am not even able to spell *Cow*.

Here we are referring to space, not to external space but to the joy mind that recognizes that the emptiness and the observing point<sup>182</sup> are inseparable. That itself is what we designate as space, rather than looking outside and referring to the external space. In other words, where am I going to place my Supreme Field of Merit? I put it into my mind of joy which recognizes emptiness.

You have to be careful about what you mean when you say ‘bliss’. If you think about some short-lived, intensive feeling, it is definitely going to make you feel like you want to throw up at a certain point. With joy that does not happen. It is peaceful. And it recognizes emptiness. This [kind of recognition] does not happen like when you say, ‘I have recognized So and So’. It is also not like the chairman recognizing the speaker. It is actually inseparable. You cannot figure out what the object is and who the observer. It has become one-ness. It is not a matter of reaching from here to there. It is all-encompassing. We have a saying in Tibet,

If you go from right to left, you will reach the woman who serves the bread.

If you go from left to right, you reach the woman who serves the bread.

Actually, this state of inseparability is the aim of all the practices, from the Lamrim to the three -kaya practices of Vajrayana. That also is just the development stage. If intensified, it goes into the completion stage. What you are really talking about is the union, the union of body and mind, the union of wisdom and method, the union of clear light and illusion body.

*EVAM. Dhe tong yeer mey* means EVAM.<sup>183</sup> What is EVAM? EVAM is the real, absolute necessary practice part of *maha anu yoga tantra*, all in a profound yet short form collected in the root-tantra of Guhyasamaja,<sup>184</sup> called *sa wa di pe sa gyu*. Guhyasamaja also has a synopsis, called *ling shi* in Tibetan, which is

<sup>182</sup> observer

<sup>183</sup> Literature: Peter Gäng, *Das Tantra der Verborgenen Vereinigung, Guhyasamaja-Tantra*, p. 80 ff and *Tantrischer Buddhismus*, p. 114-116

<sup>184</sup> Translation and commentary: Peter Gang, *Das Tantra der Verborgenen Vereinigung, Guhyasamaja-Tantra*.

about forty verses. The teachings say that there is no *maha anu yoga tantra* practice which is not included in that synopsis. The essence of that very synopsis is symbolized by and gives its message in the very first word of that synopsis, EVAM, which consists of the two words 'E' and 'VAM'.

What does EVAM mean? The method to develop Buddhahood in the shortest possible way. The shortest possible way is or depends on the bliss-void, in which there is a bliss-part and a void-part, which are the 'E' and the 'VAM'. That includes the result EVAM, the path EVAM, and the symbolic [or base] EVAM, all three of them.

The **result EVAM** is Lama Dorjechang and his environment with its inhabitants: E refers to the environment and VAM refers to Lama Dorjechang, Lama Buddha Vajradhara itself.

If I just say that, it might not be enough for you. It is tradition that I prove what I say. The easiest way to prove it is to quote from the tantra *Vajramala*. It says that E refers to the great secret space, which could be called *bhaga*<sup>185</sup>, womb, or *chung dzung*, triangular, which is a technical name for the female sex-organ, or *padma*, lotus – all the same thing.

*Bhaga chung dzung padma las*

The yogi who sits on the throne, inside the womb, at the *bhaga* and the *padma*.

That is giving you a bliss-void idea. That is how also the environment is of blissful nature, referred to as womb, referred to as lotus, referred to as triangular, which is of course the shape.

Who sits in there? Dorje Sempa, i.e. Vajrasattva, Vajradhara. Vajrasattva or Vajradhara is the same. Although there are separate deities called Vajradhara and Vajrasattva, Vajradhara is also very often referred to as Dorje Sempa. In the *Six Session Guru-Yoga* that question has come up a number of times, and we have repeatedly told you that this particular Vajrasattva is not Vajrasattva, the purification buddha; it refers to Buddha Vajradhara himself<sup>186</sup>. That is the result EVAM, the ultimate EVAM, the bliss-void combined state of environment and ultimate Buddha.

The **path EVAM**. We call the EVAM which accomplishes that result EVAM the path or the practice. What brings you that EVAM is again bliss-void itself, practicing bliss and void. Here the word E is the wisdom-emptiness and the VAM is the bliss or *tigle*,<sup>187</sup> the male part, the white drop that moves and comes through. Of course you understand, right? That wisdom which has a very strong bliss, is the essence of all the teachings of the Buddha, of sutra and tantra both, and of all three yanas, whether you count them as Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana or as *shravaka-yana*, *pratyekabuddha-yana* and *buddha-yana*. That is EVAM, also called *dharma-mahamudra*, which we'll explain later.

The bliss-void we are talking about here, is the essence of wisdom which really needs to be filled with compassion, the essence of wisdom which is compassion. In Vajrayana, bliss is part of compassion. When you cut compassion down to the level of compassion only, it is Sutra-Mahayana; Tantra-Mahayana adds the bliss to the compassion; so it is the method path.

The essence of emptiness is compassion. That is very interesting: Many of the lamas of all different schools always say that. How it really works, is very funny and tricky. Take Heruka. What does the word Heruka mean? Literally translated it becomes 'king of the blood-drinkers'. Heruka is also EVAM. The word Heruka means, this is very funny, *karuna*, compassion. What does *karuna* mean? Translated into Indo-European language, in essence it will come down to 'one who stops the joy'. What does that mean? Stopping the joy that is contaminated.

Now this is very, very interesting. I have a vivid memory of Kyabje Trijang Dorjechang explaining it. That is really something! At that time it might have gone over my head, but when I think of it now, it is very interesting. What is the difference between contaminated and uncontaminated? The four different schools of Tibetan Buddhism all have a different way of explaining. I don't mean Kagyu, Nyingma or Gelug, but the philosophy schools: Vaibhashika, Sautantrika, Cittamatra, Madhyamika. One of them says that the difference between contaminated and uncontaminated is whether or not you have become an *Arya*, whether you have seen emptiness directly or not. All different ways of explaining are there, but ultimately whatever the *Tangyur* says, we follow. I had a little difficulty in understanding that clearly and then explaining it. So I spent some time on it and one night I dreamt that Kyabje Trijang Dorjechang

<sup>185</sup> See Gehlek Rimpoche, *Vajrayogini Teachings*. Lit. Peter Gäng, *Tantrischer Buddhismus*, p. 113-114.

<sup>186</sup> Vajrasattva here means literally 'the indestructible being' and refers to one's result-stage Vajradhara. Also see Gehlek Rimpoche, *Six-session Guru yoga*, second edition.

<sup>187</sup> Also known as white bodhicitta, Tib. *tigle*, Skt. *bindu*. For the drops also see Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light of Bliss*, p. 28.

was teaching this during the *Lama Chöpa* teaching forty years ago. I had a very vivid dream explaining that for the Vajrayana practitioner the division of contaminated and uncontaminated is related to *karuna*, Heruka, EVAM and all this. How? As long as you are dripping your egg or semen it is contaminated. When you are able to reverse that, when you are able to really bring in the ultimate joy, the bliss, then, at that level, it becomes uncontaminated.

That is the meaning of the word EVAM, that is the meaning of the phrase *dhe tong yeer mey*, the indivisible voidness and bliss, and that is the meaning of the saying ‘the essence of wisdom is compassion’; it is all of those. You always hear: ‘the essence of wisdom is compassion’, everybody talks that way, and we try to understand it by thinking of bringing compassion into the wisdom or putting wisdom into the compassion, but what it really means, is what is here in the word EVAM, the first word of the actual practice *dhe tong yeer mey*, indivisible voidness and bliss. That phrase is telling you this entire message, of which I covered only a part. Also all *doha*<sup>188</sup> teachings are based on this.

Audience: Semen is a part of a man, what about the women, When a woman talks about the knots and central channel, is the situation different from the male experience?

Rinpoche: Unfortunately or fortunately I am a male (that is just joking). Well, I don’t think so. You know why? Talking on the basis of the male, what we experience on the ordinary level is that we do get semen coming out and all this, but we really don’t yet have the things that are explained here, it doesn’t count like that. I mentioned to you the question to Kyabje Song Rinpoche.<sup>189</sup> What does his answer mean? For a male the ‘semen’<sup>190</sup> comes from the forehead. For a female it<sup>191</sup> comes from the navel-level. The sources of joy of the woman are at the navel-level and the sources of joy of the male are at the crown-level. So the reverse I believe (I have no experience, I overheard it somewhere) is moving from the navel-level up to the crown and then dripping down.<sup>192</sup> It is supposed to be that way. The female has more joy-experience than the male, because the passages are longer. Maybe it is an advantage of not being a monk that we can talk about it.

Audience: (...).

Rinpoche: I did two EVAM’s; the third one may come some day. If you really look into the teaching from the beginning to the end you will not miss it.

*kün zang chö trin trig pay ü*  
*lo ma me toh dre bü yong dze*  
*dhö gü pah sam jön pei tser*  
*dhong nga bar wei rin chen tri teng*  
*chu kye nyi dha kye pei teng.*

st. 7.     ... **Amidst wondrous clouds of infinite offerings,**  
**Is the tree that grants our every wish,**  
**Adorned with flowers, leaves and fruit.**  
**At its crown, on a lion throne ablaze with jewels,**  
**You sit on a lotus and full moon, ...**

Within that vast space of indivisible bliss and emptiness you generate a very, very beautiful environment with nice, wonderful snow-peaked mountains, green fields, and a huge open lake, a lake of milk. In the center of that lake are two mythical figures, *nagas*, which have complete control over all wealth. They are standing up holding with one hand the very base of the tree that you are going to generate, and in the other hand a jewel.

*Kün zang chö trin*. The space is filled up with offerings. *kün zang* is an abbreviation of *Küntu Zangpo*. *Chö* is offering and *trin* means clouds. What comes across in the Tibetan and not in English is the spaciousness. In that spacious space you have infinite, unlimited, unconditioned offerings. So, *amidst wondrous clouds of infinite offerings*. It is poetic language again. Before we talked about space as *the*

<sup>188</sup> Enlightenment songs by Saraha.

<sup>189</sup> See page 24.

<sup>190</sup> That ‘semen’ is also called white drops or white bodhicitta, located at the crown chakra. Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 108.

<sup>191</sup> Called red drops, or red bodhicitta, or egg, or blood.

<sup>192</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 134-145.

gods' dwelling place, and along with that goes the image of the clouds. We are not offering clouds but the offerings appear like clouds. At that time they did not have air planes. The birds don't fly that high, so up there you have only clouds. In your visualization you have the completely joyful mind which does not even know any misery at all. This mind not only recognizes the nature which is emptiness. It is inseparable, one-ness. It is tremendously spacious. At the same time it is not empty. It is full of various wondrous offerings which appear everywhere, like clouds. They fill up that space.

*Küntu Zangpo*. Western translators normally translate that as Samantabhadra. In Tibetan we talk about Samantabhadra type of offerings. They are abundant, not limited. Each body produces a hundred thousand more and each one of those has a hundred thousand heads, each head produces a hundred thousand tongues, *etc*, there are no limitations. That is what really infinite offerings are. One freedom that we all have and that no one can cut, is our mind! Whatever fantasy or whatever imagination you have, no one else can limit it. This is our true freedom. Don't think of a glass of wine; think in oceans of wine! Likewise, why one sun? Take multi-galaxies of suns! That is what I mean by abundance.

In Vajrayana there is also another explanation for *kün tu zang po*;<sup>193</sup> *kün tu* means 'always', and *zang po* means 'good'. This means in the beginning, in the middle, and at the end, it is always important and good. This again refers to the bliss-void, which is not only bliss-void inseparable, but simultaneously grown bliss-void that functions automatically, automatically joined. The mind which recognizes emptiness automatically goes into a blissful nature. Automatic union, that is what simultaneously born means. When one grows, the other also grows. So the moment you get wisdom you have bliss. When you have bliss, you also get void. It is sort of packaged together. When one happens, the other happens automatically. But that doesn't mean you lose the intensity, no. Such a bliss-void, rather than Samantabhadra's manifestation, will become the offerings. The offerings are by nature bliss-void.

*Wishfulfilling tree*. At the center of these offering clouds is *the tree that grants our every wish*. We are talking about the quality of the tree itself. Why is it called wish-fulfilling tree? Because it gives you everything, clothes, food, medicine and whatever you need. This tree itself is capable of giving it. Where does it come from? From God's place. God has provided it. [laughs] Actually it comes from the pure land known as Western Paradise. [Tib. *Nub sho de wa chen*; Skt. *Sukhavati*]. It is Amitabha Buddha's pure land. Could it be Flint, Michigan? Maybe. Yesterday we called it the worst place you can find and today it has become the Western Paradise. That is really emptiness!!

There is a Hindu-Buddhist mythological context for the wish-fulfilling tree. There happens to be such a tree between the realm of the gods and the realm of the demi-gods. The gods and the demi-gods always fight about who owns the tree. It is said that the demi-gods suffer from jealousy, because the roots of the tree are in the demi-god realm and the leaves and fruits are in the god realms. Another reason why the image of a tree is chosen to generate the Supreme Field of Merit is that a tree is alive. It has life. There is still another reason, which however, right now I don't know.

When it is said that this tree is coming from the pure land, you don't have to worry how it got there, whether it was lifted, *etc*. It is mentally created stuff. That makes a difference. There is a German woman who knows a lot about Buddhism, who has studied very well. But years later, she still has tremendous problems with the Vajrayana visualizations. She raised the question, 'What is the difference between me thinking that I am Heruka or Yamantaka and thinking that I am Napoleon or Julius Caesar? The problem here is that if there is only wild imagination, not linked to the truth, then there is no difference. But that is not the case. That is why I have said that the wish-fulfilling tree is actually coming from the Western Paradise. Here you are not a free-lance artist who simply draws a creature according to his own impressions and takes over its identity. It is different here. To whatever you do, there is a point. If you don't know what to think when you visualize tantric forms, you might as well think that you are Julius Caesar or Napoleon. This particular woman is very learned and wonderful, but now she only practices the Mahayana sutra part, not tantra. Her problem could not be solved by a number of great teachers.

So it is not just the free-lance expression of a wild, crazy artist. There are historical facts: there are sources to which you can trace it, there is a space to dissolve it into, there is a place to be manifested, a place to function and ultimately it will actually materialize as you have imagined it. That will be your mandala, your Supreme Field of Merit. You have to think like that right from the beginning. Of course

<sup>193</sup> Also see page 86.

there is a big cultural influence involved. We have already talked about that. You can easily put a wall street sky scraper into the center of your mandala. The original Indian tantric rules and shapes, like squares, moon shapes, triangular shapes have to be applied. A lot of lines have been drawn in the sand. We have certain free expressions and certain lines have to be respected. It is not just wild imagination.

This tree is not a dry tree but it has a lot of leaves and branches and fruits. *Lo ma* is leaves, *me toh* is flowers, *dre bü* is fruit. *Dho gü pah sam* is wishfulfilling. The tree has six side-branches, three to the left, three to the right, and one central branch. In Tibetan, the tree is *pah sam gi shing*; it is completely made up of seven groups of precious materials: the root of the tree, which is in the middle of the milk lake, is gold, the tree trunk is silver, the branches lapis lazuli, the stems of blue ruby, the leaves are crystal, the flowers are red pearls (normally pearls are white but red pearls are very precious jewels and also they're not small but big) and the fruits are huge diamonds, as huge as a utensil that can hold five kilo. Actually it is a special dark-colored stone from the ocean, maybe even more precious than diamond. If you can't see it all very well, just get the idea of a big tree with seven branches coming up.

It is a jewel-tree, like a huge Christmas tree with all its ornaments and lights and so on. Not one cheap thing is in there, since Vajrayana doesn't go for fake or showy stuff, but goes for quality. Really high quality. Wealth can, to a certain extent, accomplish what you want, and to a certain extent the power and capability of individuals is enhanced by wealth as well. Similarly, to help to accumulate merit, Vajrayana goes for quality, not for cheap imitations. So it is a good Christmas tree, like the Japanese diamond Christmas trees shown on television every year. Crystal, silver bells decorate it and the sound of the bells gives you the message of the essence of the Dharma.

Not only that, this tree grants wishes. *Pah sam* has a lot of meanings. If you think of that tree or if you can imagine it, a tremendous number of wishes can be fulfilled. Why is it called a wish-fulfilling tree? Whatever spiritual aim one has, whether seeking a great future rebirth; whether wanting 'to go for lunch' (I am referring to nirvana<sup>194</sup>) or whether wanting to obtain enlightenment, whatever one seeks can be fulfilled just by seeing it, or just by hearing the movement of the air through the tree. Don't expect the 'whoosh' sound of maple trees. It must be different here, because of all the silver, diamonds, and crystals hitting each other. It is probably more like 'ting-ting-ting'. It produces beautiful music, and just hearing that will be able to fulfill whatever you wish, in particular learning and the essence of wisdom. The tree also has a very beautiful smell, and just the smell and the touch of the tree are said to have the power to overcome all four hundred illnesses.

In short, whether you touch, smell, see, or hear that tree, it has the power to pacify or purify all your sufferings and negativities. Not only that, it is also wish-fulfilling in that it satisfies the material needs of those who need food, clothes, shelter, medicine, support, power, money. Whatever you need the tree is able to fulfill. That is why it is called *dho gü*, wish-fulfilling; *pah sam jön pa* is the technical name for wish-fulfilling tree.

*At its crown...* In Tibetan it just say *tser*: 'top'. On the top of the central branch, you have the lion throne. In Tibetan it just says *dong nga*: 'five faces', which stands for lion. It refers to the five points that make up a lion's face. The lions in the Tibetan way of drawing have faces like the Lhasa Apsus, those Pekinese-looking dogs. They have these five facial features. *Bar wai* means coming out. So those five points come out. Sometimes, when you use *bar* in relation to fire, it can mean blazing. It can also relate to the next word *rin chen tri*. In this case it reads *a lion throne ablaze with jewels*. The throne is being lifted by eight lions, two in each direction. This throne is completely made of jewels, huge and open.

Why do you put your Supreme Field of Merit on a tree? You are bound to think, "Why of all places a tree, a most unsteady sort of thing, why not choose something stable like solid rock?" There is a reason for this, which is connected with the completion stage. At the appropriate time, I'll share it with you.

*The throne.* The throne is square. Thrones are always square, because that represents the four fearlessnesses.<sup>195</sup> Buddhas are without the following fears regarding teaching the Dharma:

<sup>194</sup> Arhat nirvana. See p. 88.

<sup>195</sup> Also called the four self-confidences, one of the many qualities of a buddha. Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey: '(...) there are four proclamations which a clear evolved one is fearless to make. The first two concern what is of meaningful benefit for himself, while the second two what will be of meaningful benefit for others. This is, he is fearless in proclaiming (1) his own realiza-

1. fear of teaching the ultimate freedom or the pure part of the Buddhas' qualities of development;
2. fear of teaching the pure part of the Buddhas' qualities of clearing;
3. fear of teaching the Dharma which destroys the reluctance to seek liberation by showing what one needs to get rid of;
4. fear of teaching Dharma that may create some obstacles.

The throne is lifted by eight lions, two at each corner. The four fearlessnesses have become lions, actually. So, the four squares represent the four fearlessnesses, and the lions do also. Both explanations are okay.<sup>196</sup>

The lions have one paw up and one paw down; the one paw looks like it is lifting the tree, but it is also threatening all the obstacles that come from the higher levels. We divide the space into upper, lower, and middle, three realms. The message here is, that if any being from a higher level of power tries to obstruct or disturb these very practitioners, they are stopped by the fearless power of Lama Buddha Vajradhara, so that they do not dare to come and disturb them. The other paw that is down threatens anything from the lower level that would like to harm the practitioner. None of them will dare to move or even take a breath; they will be smashed down.

*Three cushions.* Above that you have a multicolored lotus, which has hundred thousand petals, in eleven layers. The lotus indicates that there is no fault at all. It indicates purity. This purity and the *Nature pure* from before are two separate things. Here it is pure in the sense that there are no samsaric faults at all.

The reason why we separate that from the bliss-void in the beginning and have that space creating and putting it on the throne, *etc.* is in order to avoid samsaric problems. Otherwise you could put that throne up and a little lotus on top of that, but you don't. Somebody could make a diagram on the computer to show what it looks like. We could have a computer drawing, an outline that everybody could copy onto their computers, sort of a computer software program.

On its center, which is very open and huge is a moon disc and a sun disc. There are two different, equally valid, ways of looking at what the three cushions represent. In the first way, the lotus, moon, and sun represent the Three Principal Paths. A second explanation is that you have a red-colored sun disc to represent the wisdom of the Supreme Field of Merit, a white-colored moon disc to represent the perfect method of the merit field, and the lotus to represent that the objects of refuge or merit field are faultless. When you visualize sun and moon discs, don't think of a little CD disk, although it is. Think of a cushion. Think that you are providing the best ever possible sitting arrangement for your great master of three kindnesses.

The treetop is huge. You can't think of a tiny little tree and imagine everything on top of that. The tree itself is huge, a million miles tall. That's my exaggeration, but visualize it as huge as you can manage. In proportion to this huge treetop, you have a huge throne, you have a huge lotus and you have above that a moon disc and a sun disc.

*Symbolism of the tree.* We talk about each one of these things as if they are fairy tale pictures, but in reality these are the qualities of the merit-field. The Three Principles of the Path become the environment or the lake, love-compassion becomes the root of the wish fulfilling tree, the tree itself is your own practice of generosity, morality and all this, the six paramitas. The flowers are the twenty-two different bodhi-minds.<sup>197</sup> The fruits are the four paramitas to help others.<sup>198</sup> One of the nagas that support the tree is wisdom, the other is compassion.<sup>199</sup> The four fearlessnesses become the eight lions of the throne. You rehearse these during the beginning period of practice, and when they become actualized, they are the qualities of the merit field. That is why everything here is high quality, not imitation.

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tions of all qualities and skills and (2) riddances of all mental obscurations, (3) what others must rid themselves of, namely the obscurations due to their disturbing attitudes if they wish liberation and, in addition, those concerning all knowables if they wish omniscience, and (4) the opponent forces, for others to rely upon in order to remove all their mental obscurations. *Anthology of Well-Spoken Advice*, p. 259-260. For all qualities and skills of a buddha see the same work, p. 242-266 or Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in Our Hands*, vol. II, p. 287-321.

<sup>196</sup> Also see Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 78, Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness* p. 65-66, Pabongka, *Liberation in Our Hands*, vol. I, p. 174.

<sup>197</sup> For the twenty-two bodhicittas, see Glossary.

<sup>198</sup> For the four ways of ripening the mind of others, see Glossary.

<sup>199</sup> Or absolute and relative bodhicitta.



## Generating the Principal

Generating of the principal has two parts:

1. In the Three Beings.
2. In the 'Body Mandala'.<sup>200</sup>

## Generating the Principal in the Three Beings<sup>201</sup>

*ka drin sum dhen tsa wei la ma  
sang gyay kün gyi ngo wo nyi  
nam par ngur mik dzin pei ge long  
zhel chik chah nyi dzum kar tro.  
chah yee chö chye yön pa nyam zhah  
dü tsi gang way lung zey nam  
gur gum dhang dhen chö gö sum söl  
ser doh pän zhey u la dzey*

- st. 7     **... my Root Guru.  
Kind in three ways, the essence of all Buddhas.**
- st. 8     **You appear as a fully ordained monk  
With one face, two hands, and a radiant smile.  
Your right hand makes the gesture of teaching;  
Your left, in meditation, holds a bowl of nectar.  
You wear the three saffron robes  
And a golden scholar's hat.**

*Three kindnesses* – *ka drin sum*. This verse is talking about the root master with the three kindnesses who is the essence of all Buddhas. Does essence mean something like ginseng essence? No, it means that in reality he is inseparable, one-ness. We use the word *inseparable* so many times that it is beginning to become a buzz word. To avoid it becoming that, you have to think that you cannot make a separation at all, that it is impossible to figure out who is Buddha and who is the kind guru and who is the yidam. They are all the same person. There is no separate identity. That is the meaning of one-ness and one taste. Perhaps we may have to rethink the word *essence* again. It may sound like 'pure Buddha extract'.

The three kindnesses are counted a little differently in sutra and tantra.

- In the sutra way, the 'lama of the three kindnesses' refers to one from whom you have received 1) vows; 2) oral transmissions; 3) explanations.
- According to tantra, it is receiving: 1) initiations; 2) oral transmissions; 3) explanations on tantra.

*Tsa wei la ma* means root guru. Who is a root guru? Some people, particularly in the West, think that whoever you meet first is your root guru. Wrong. Some people think that whoever you take refuge from, is your root guru. Wrong. You have to choose your root guru yourself from among your gurus; nobody chooses for you. Your root guru is the one who has really been most helpful and effective in bringing about your spiritual development, the one from whom you received the three kindnesses, and the one *you* select.

These days we see a number of Dharma centers or groups who try to claim individual practitioners, "Because you took refuge here, you belong here." Nobody has a claim over you or over any individual, no Dharma centers, no groups, not even monasteries, not Jewel Heart, not Aura or Sandy, not even me. Really true. Nobody can claim you.

<sup>200</sup> Because not a body mandala in the strict sense of the word – see note 67 on p. 23 – we put 'body mandala' where the word could not easily be avoided.

<sup>201</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 80-90. Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 66-73.

*Sang gyay kün gyi ngo wo nyi.* The root master of the three kindnesses is *the essence of all Buddhas*. He is, in absolute reality, all enlightened beings in the physical appearance of, in this case, Tsongkhapa. Here we have an extraordinary and a common explanation.

1. One way of explaining is the same as in the Yamantaka teachings. Manjushri serves there as the essence of all enlightened beings. To make it easy, the essence or nature of all enlightened beings is kindness or compassion, knowledge and power. That is why you have the three deities: Manjushri represents wisdom and knowledge, Avalokiteshvara represents compassion and Vajrapani represents power. The three of them are called *rig sum gön po*, ‘the leaders of the three families. So the essence of all enlightened beings means the essence of the kindness of all enlightened beings, the essence of the power of all enlightened beings and the essence of the wisdom of all enlightened beings.
2. Another way of explaining is with the kayas. If we count four kayas, we have: *Svabavikakaya*, *Dharmakaya*, *Sambhogakaya*, *Nirmanakaya*.<sup>202</sup> (Usually we count three kayas, because we have a practice that way.) The nature kaya, or Svabavikakaya, means the real essence of it. The real essence is, again, wisdom nature; the wisdom nature is the nature of all existence, which is emptiness. That is what the *ngo wo nyi* refers to, the whole essence of all the Buddhas.

*You appear as a fully ordained monk.* The appearance is in this case Lama Tsongkhapa. *Dzin pei ge long*, wearing the robes of a full-fledged bikshu: in India this is the yellow robe, in Tibet the golden and red-maroon robe. What does *ge long* mean? *Ge* means ‘one who seeks the meaning of liberation’ and *long* means ‘one who begs for food’. Tsongkhapa is wearing the three different robes, *chö gö*, *nam jar*, *dan gö*, and the pandit hat. In actuality he is all the Buddhas, not only a Buddha. That includes all yidams, everything. Here the appearance is that of a fully ordained monk. This is because we are in Buddha Shakyamuni’s order. In this order the most important section is that of the fully ordained monks. There are obviously some gender difficulties here for those who pay attention. For those who don’t pay attention to that there is no problem. Is it good to pay attention to that here? In my personal opinion it is. So there is a gender problem. However, we cannot change the author’s wording. You don’t go and rewrite the book. You have to leave it there. If you want to compose a new Lama Chöpa, of course you can change it to *holy person* or something. But one thing I would like to say here: If you have a root guru who is a lady, I am quite sure you can change this passage in your own visualization so that the root guru appears as a woman, but you cannot change the wording. What I don’t want to do is make the root guru into a hermaphrodite or genderless, like when people say ‘God is not a man and not a woman, but neutral.’ That would be terrible. You don’t want somebody there who is genderless, that would be useless.

The Lama has one face, two hands and is smiling, always happy, looking at you; he is not irritated, tired, or overwhelmed, but in a happy, joyful, smiling, joking mood. As the text says *with one face, two hands and a radiant smile*. You know, in the Tibetan there are three words at this place: *dzum kar tro*. The author picked up three syllables from three different words and put them together into one expression. That way it is not only smiling, but also showing his white teeth. *Kar* means white. *Tro* indicates that he is very happily giving you this smile. There is a reason for that. The emphasis is that your Supreme Field of Merit is absolutely in love with you. In English all we are left with is *radiant smile*. It is more than a majestic, radiant smile. It has the personal touch. The three separate components of this expression emphasize that this smile has something to do with me rather than it is some smiling guy over there. We may be losing some value here. We have to see to it that it is totally personal. It is only between him and you. We may be talking in a large group about this subject, but you have to think that it is only between him and you, one individual. You should not lose that personal touch here. We may have to think about a better word to clarify the personal touch. That smile and also the reaction from the recipient should be like when newly-connected lovers see each other after a period of separation. It should not be like a couple who see each other at home and have nothing nice to say to each other.

<sup>202</sup> 1. svabhavikakaya or nature truth body, Tib. *ngo bo nyid sku*; 2. jnana-dharmakaya or wisdom truth body; Tib. *ye shes chos sku*. 3. sambhogakaya or enjoyment body; Tib. *longs sku*; 4. nirmanakaya or emanation-body or manifestation body; Tib. *sprul sku* [pronounce: tulku]. 1 and 2 form together the dharmakaya or wisdom-body of a buddha; 3 and 4 form together the rupakaya or form-body of a buddha.

*Mudra.* The same goes for the hand gestures of the lama. It says in the text *Your right hand makes the gesture of teaching*, but you also have to think that the lama says, ‘I will help you, protect you and guide you, tell you whatever you need to know. Let’s see how we can work together.’ That is the meaning of the teaching gesture. Don’t think of it as symbolic, that there is somebody holding his fingers in a particular position by which you know ‘Hey, he is teaching’. It has to be a gesture which has a message for you.

The left hand also has a message. *Your left, in meditation, holds a bowl of nectar*. It tells you that while the lama helps you and tells you what you need to know, you are the one who has to put it into the meditative level. That meditation should not be an empty meditation. It tells you that while the lama helps you and tells you what you need to know, you are the one who has to put it into the meditative level.

With the right hand in the mudra of giving teachings, the left in the mudra of meditation, he is also holding a flower blooming at both sides of his ears. On the flower to his left hand side is a text book [and a sword]. The book contains your own practice, whatever you are struggling with. In general, we say it is the *Prajnaparamita* text, the root text of the transcendental teachings, but individually it can be whatever you are practicing. It is a self-speaking book, it talks automatically, and is more effective than a computer since it explains how to resolve any difficulties you are having. On the flower at his right hand side is the wisdom sword [and book].

The two hand mudras, the left showing meditation and the right showing teaching activity, are also functioning together, at the same time. At the level of a Buddha, one can meditate, be totally absorbed in the object of meditation, and simultaneously carry out other activities such as teaching, *etc.* At the enlightened level they are capable of that, they are not limited, so many things can be done at the same time. We have to do everything in turn. In the Tibetan tradition, even on our level there is a strong emphasis on saying mantras and reciting texts while also meditating. Those of you who have been into this for a couple of years, can do it together. But the new ones find it is impossible to recite and meditate together. People find it quite difficult to meditate and say prayers at the same time. When you meditate, you can’t say anything, and when you recite, you can’t meditate. But, when you get used to it, you can do it together. Likewise here, the enlightened beings can meditate and teach and manifest and create and dissolve all together, simultaneously. That is what is meant by limitless activities functioning effortlessly. If you look at your image, thangka, or photograph of the merit field and see those things and remember this, it helps you to accumulate merit, it helps you to build appreciation and to get inspiration.

*Learn and meditate.* These mudras also give us this message: learn and meditate. The teaching mudra of the right hand emphasizes the importance of learning. The meditation mudra of the left hand shows that you have to meditate on and put into practice whatever you have learned. The combination of learning and practice is the important point here.

If you don’t learn, if you just try to sit and meditate, you are not going to do any good at all. A number of people will say that you can just sit down and meditate. If you do that, you will have a tremendous variety of thoughts without any idea what is good and what is bad. You will have no idea what to discard and what to follow, so you will either discard everything or follow everything, and then what is going to happen to you? Discriminating wisdom of what to follow and what to discard is definitely needed, and that comes only as a result of learning.

Learning is the first step. The Tsongkhapa tradition emphasizes learning so strongly that some people even criticize it as being too scholarly. They say it produces intellectual, impressive, smooth-talking persons. But, the real point of it is, if you don’t have the knowledge, if you don’t have the information, you won’t know what to do. The purpose of learning is not to make you a scholar, though, if you become a scholar, great, there is nothing wrong with that. You have to meditate on whatever you learn. If you don’t do that, you really will become a tape recorder or a dry professor with a lot of notebooks covered in dust who year after year and course after course picks up the same old notebook and makes a few additions here and there. That is not right. To make it a living tradition, to make a difference to the individual practitioner, meditation is absolutely required. A combination of learning and meditation together is needed. If you don’t do that, you are going to miss it.

*Book and sword.* Tsongkhapa carries both book and sword at his right and left shoulder respectively to emphasize analytical thinking. If you really want to meditate, you need the essence or the gist of what

you have learned. You cannot meditate on everything that you have heard or read. All that information has to be distilled into a very short, precise essence on which you should really meditate. To find the essence, through analysis, is something that you can only do yourself. This essence of learning is what will make the difference to the individual. When you have that, you can meditate. Through meditation, it will become part of your life. Actually the book, sword, and Tsongkhapa are all Manjushri: Manjushri in book-form, Manjushri in sword-form, Manjushri in human form.

Now you see why the hand mudras and hand implements are important. They give you messages. When you visualize and look at this every day, it reminds you of the importance of learning, thinking, and meditating. If you are good, if you become perfect at it, then it is time for you to express it. You do that through teaching, debating, composing, writing poetry, making music, presenting a drama, or any other form of expression.

*Begging bowl.* The begging bowl in Tsongkhapa's lap represents lessened activity, fewer needs. Your meditation should not be an empty meditation. You get that message from the bowl which the lama is carrying. It is Buddha's begging bowl in which he collects the food, the nourishment to sustain his body. It means that the meditation is your spiritual food, which you are going to get. These days that sort of life style does not work any more. The begging bowl is filled up with the three nectars:

1. the medicinal nectar that destroys illnesses;
2. the life nectar that defeats death;
3. the wisdom nectar that defeats contamination.<sup>203</sup>

In the spiritual field there are four different kinds of obstacles, called the four evils or the four maras:

1. the evil of form or the aggregates [Skt. *skandhamara*, Tib. *pungpoi du*];
2. the evil of Yama, the Lord of Death [Skt. *mṛtyupatimara*, Tib. *shi da gi du*];
3. the evil of delusions, like anger, hatred, etc. [Skt. *kleshamara*, Tib. *nyönmong gi du*];
4. the evil of the son of god [Skt. *devamara*, Tib. *hlai pui du*].

Basically the nectar and the begging bowl symbolize the overcoming of these different kinds of evil. The three nectars destroy the first three of the four evils and the fourth evil is destroyed by the gesture of meditation. The fourth evil refers to attachment, since the activity of the son of the gods is to shoot the arrows of attachment that increase people's attachment and ensure that they remain in samsara. Meditation stabilizes your mind so that it cannot be influenced by attachment. These four evils show you that the danger does not come from outside, but from inside, if you think about it very carefully. The first evil is the evil of form, and the biggest attachment is that to our form or body. The second evil, whatever shortens our life, is also within us. The third one is the delusions, which also is certainly nothing outside.

*You wear three saffron robes and a golden scholar's hat.* It is not the ordinary saffron that we get from Spain, but a specific saffron that you get from Kashmir, which is supposed, as the mythological story tells, to have grown in the shadow of the robe of one of the arhats and which is more golden than reddish. All full-fledged bikshus have to wear three saffron robes.

Also Tsongkhapa wears the beautiful golden **hat**. Gold is the essence of earth and the golden color represents the purity of the earth. The shape of the hat is of the Indian pandits, that is why it is very pointed. Yet it is slightly bent down at the point, which means the pride is reduced and the mind is enriched by the two kinds of bodhimind. This is a good omen for practitioners to have longevity, good fortune, and great wisdom. Actually, it is the hat of the learned scholars and thus corresponds to wisdom. So, putting the hat on the Lama's head gives you the message, the understanding as well as the karma to be able to develop great wisdom and longevity and fortune.<sup>204</sup>

*thuh kar khyap dhah dor je chang  
wang zhal chik chah nyi ku doh ngo  
dor dril zung ney yeeng chuh mar  
khyü lhen kye dhe tong röl pei gyay  
nam mang rin chen gyen gyi tre shing*

<sup>203</sup> Also see page 167.

<sup>204</sup> For additional teachings on the hat, the mudra, the flowers and the crossed legs see Gehlek Rimpoche, *Ganden Lha Gyema*, Ch. III.

*lha zhay dhar gyi nam zay lup  
tshen pei gyen den ö zer tong bar  
ja tshön na ngay kor wei ü  
dor je kyil trung tsül gyi zhuh pay*

**At your heart is Buddha Dorje Chang,  
Blue in color, one face, two hands,**

**St 9 Holding vajra and bell, embracing Yingchugma.  
You delight in the play of simultaneous bliss and void.  
Adorned with jeweled ornaments and garments of heavenly silk,  
Surrounded by a beautiful rainbow, you sit in diamond posture  
Radiant, and with every sign and mark.**

*At your heart is Buddha Dorje Chang.* The Principal is *Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorje Chang*. Lama Lozang refers to Tsongkhapa, whose ordination name was Lozang<sup>205</sup> Dragpa. In the expression Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang, the Lozang comes from Tsongkhapa's name. Lama Lozang refers to the external **commitment being**.

Then Tubwang, which is Buddha Shakyamuni, is the essence. To represent that, he is at the heart level of Lama Lozang. He is the **wisdom being**. He is golden-colored and performs the usual gestures, with the right hand touching the earth, the left in the meditating mudra, holding a begging bowl filled with nectar just like Lama Lozang. That particular gesture of Buddha is also known as *dun du ma*, the mudra of overpowering evils. Sometimes it is even translated as the victory gesture of Buddha. This is because when Buddha was just about to obtain enlightenment, the evils came to challenge him.<sup>206</sup> Each of the evils demonstrated their power, but whatever they threw at Buddha, he defeated it. All the weapons became flowers. Buddha finally told Mara,

You can't defeat me because you have very limited capabilities and that is because you have limited positive karma. I, on the other hand, have achieved the Buddha stage, so you cannot defeat me.

Then Mara said,

You are my witness that I have limited power. Who is your witness?

So Buddha touched the ground and the Mother Earth Goddess came up and said,

I am the witness.

That is why this mudra is called the mudra of overpowering evils. So the way to overpower the evil forces is actually through kindness and compassion, rather than through anger and destruction or slogans. (Though slogans are not so bad. Some nice slogans against Gingrich will perhaps work.)

*Love.* The weapons becoming flowers is actually a sign of the ultimate development of compassion and love, particularly love. Love is the most important protection. Buddha had ways and means of defeating millions of evils without holding a single weapon. He just transformed the challengers' harmful weapons into flower offerings or decorations or ornaments. That is the karmic result of ultimate love. That is why in the initiations they give you a protection thread in the name of Buddha Maitreya, the Buddha of love.<sup>207</sup> That is done for two reasons, first, to indicate that the protection is needed until Maitreya comes to this world, and second, to indicate love. It shows that love is the most important achievement.

People ask how long they should meditate on love. The answer is until you can change weapons into flowers. That is the ultimate achievement of this meditation. The second level of achievement is when people are not able to harm you any more, they somehow just can't do it. A good example of this is when Pen Kong invited David, who is a karate teacher and holds a black belt, to hit him on the head during one of our winter retreats. Pen Kong just sat down and David tried as hard as he could. I was really worried. A tiny little guy just sitting down! But he came to no harm. David said later that his hand skidded just an inch be-

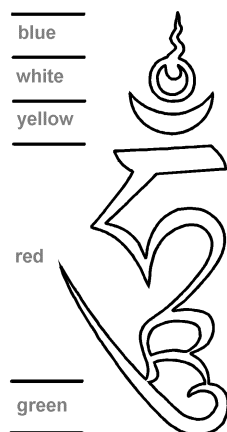
<sup>205</sup> In sanskrit Sumati.

<sup>206</sup> This was shown in the movie, 'Little Buddha'.

<sup>207</sup> Picture: J. Landaw and A. Weber, *Images of Enlightenment*, plate 32.

fore hitting Pen Kong's head. Whether it was meditative power or kung fu power, it is an example of how no harm comes even from a forceful attack. We are really fortunate that we have been given quite a lot of actual, literal, physical examples in this sangha. The last level of achievement of protection is that at least you won't be hurt badly. These are the results of love and compassion.

If you go still deeper, then the real essence is Buddha Vajradhara [Tib. *Dorje Chang*] as the **concentration being**. He is at the heart of Buddha Shakyamuni sitting on a lotus and sun cushion. He is also referred to as *dang po gön po* or *rig gyu khyap dhah*. That comes close to being the creator, meaning 'all-pervading' or 'source of all'. *Rig gya*, *rig nga*, *rig sum* or *rig do*, whether hundred buddha castes<sup>208</sup>, five, three, or one, it is all a manifestation of, or rather in this case 'created by' the primordial Buddha, Buddha Vajradhara. He is blue-colored with one face and two hands. The right hand holds a five-spoked golden vajra. The left holds a five-spoked golden bell. He is embracing his consort Vajradhatu Ishvari [Tib. *Yingchukma*], who is also blue in color. His arms are around her body, while she has her arms around his neck. Both of them wear head and throat ornaments, necklaces, body ornaments and also silk scarves.



All three, commitment being, wisdom being, and concentration being, have the major and minor marks of a Buddha and generate a lot of light from inside their bodies. Around them is a rainbow tent of five colors, white, yellow, red, green and blue, coming from the HUM in the heart that is radiating light. The HUM is blue in general; from its top, the squiggle [Tib. *nada*] blue light radiates. From the sun disc type of thing [Tib. *tigle*]<sup>209</sup> white light radiates, from the crescent moon yellow, from the HA-body red and from the U green light. That is how the five colors<sup>210</sup> come from the concentration being in the center of the heart. If you can clearly visualize it, fine. If you can't, that's what it is.<sup>211</sup>

They sit in the cross-legged vajra position. The rainbow tent surrounds them but you don't have to imagine it very close to their heads. In one of the thangkas drawn by a westerner you can see the lama in the center and his body is in the rainbow colors and the rainbow lights are radiating out. I believe it was one of Lama Zopa's students and perhaps Lama Zopa suggested that it should be done in that way to display the light-nature of the body of the lama. It is actually written on some postcards of this thangka that it was drawn that way on the instructions of Lama Zopa.

*Three beings.* Generating the Lama in the form of the three beings is one of the very important points of this practice. Many Vajrayana activities depend very much on the physical form, particularly the process of dissolving.<sup>212</sup> The external form, the commitment being<sup>213</sup> Lama Tsongkhapa, represents our own gross outer, physical body. Inside of that the wisdom being,<sup>214</sup> Buddha Shakyamuni, represents the *gnyug mai lu*, which is hard to translate. It is almost like primordial, very close to that. It is the subtle body. It is close to what is known as *trawai lu*<sup>215</sup>, not completely the same. It is more than that. It is not called 'subtle body', there must be another English word for that. The concentration being<sup>216</sup>, Buddha Vajradhara, represents the subtle mind.

So the front visualization of the three beings, Lama, Buddha, and Buddha Vajradhara, corresponds to our gross body, our subtle body and our subtle mind.<sup>217</sup> This is important to note right now. Later there will be more practices on the basis of that.

<sup>208</sup> For the hundred buddha castes see page 228.

<sup>209</sup> Rinpoche also calls it drop or zero or *ma*..

<sup>210</sup> Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 82: 'the nature of his five exalted wisdoms'.

<sup>211</sup> Dalai Lama, *Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 72: Imagine that, at the tip of these light-rays, many different emanations are being created, emitting out and returning. The deity is constantly engaged in the activity of creating these emanations to help sentient beings.'

<sup>212</sup> See page 315.

<sup>213</sup> Skt. *samaya-sattva*; Tib. *dam-tsig sems-pa*.

<sup>214</sup> Skt. *jnana-sattva*; Tib. *ye-shes sems-pa*.

<sup>215</sup> *trawai lu* is the subtle body of channels and drops of this life, received from the father and mother; *gnyug mai lu* is that which transmigrates at death.

<sup>216</sup> or absorption-being; Tib. *ting- nge-dzin sems-pa*.

<sup>217</sup> On the meaning of the three beings also see Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 85-91.

There is also the possibility of the Lama himself (the commitment-being) being visualized in the form of Buddha Shakyamuni, like in the refuge tree. Then, at his heart-level, you can have Heruka four faces and twelve hands, or even Lama Vajrayogini one face and two hands, or Guhyasamaja, or Yamantaka, as wisdom-being. All these you can do, it is optional.<sup>218</sup>

*Lhen kye dhe tong röl pay gyay* – *You delight in the play of simultaneous bliss and void.* I have a little problem with the translation of this line. *Lhen kye* really means that it is naturally there. The bliss-void is completely there. *In the play* seems to suggest that there is some effort and movement involved. (Audience: Not necessarily. The word *play* can have the meaning of effortless activity too.)

When you look at Dorje Chang you think, ‘You are holding vajra and bell, representing wisdom and compassion, and you are also in union with your consort, within the delight of that union.’ The delight in that union is the simultaneous bliss-void combination. In other words, you are thinking, ‘The joy nature acknowledging emptiness is part and parcel of you, Dorje Chang. It is always there, not only effortlessly, but it *is* you. You are the nature of joy, that one-ness of recognizing voidness.’

Audience: In another translation the term *spontaneous* is used.

Rinpoche: That signifies that it is effortless.

Audience: It also means that it is in the moment, right then.

Rinpoche: Yes, that is true, but at the same time it does not express the sense of one-ness, the same taste. I don’t think *simultaneous* and *spontaneous* makes that much difference. Both don’t express one-ness very well. The word *gyay* in that line means joy, happiness. That indicates that Dorje Chang is in that experience. I would like to change the word *bliss* to *joy* perhaps.

This union or yab-yum style represents that the individual is in union within oneself, whatever the partner within maybe. Here the female represents the wisdom and the male represents the method. The actual union is the union of illusion-body and clear light: the clear light is the wisdom represented by the female and the illusion-body the method, probably male. That union shows that the individual itself is of bliss-void nature: clear light and illusion-body inseparable all the time. The single reason for these pictures with a consort in union is to try to show you the nature of the enlightened beings: bliss-void nature itself, appearing in different forms. Why is this emphasized? That’s because it is the home. You are at home. That’s the real truth. Also this is the process: the process of purifying, of uplifting, of development is this!

*Adorned with jeweled ornaments and garments of heavenly silks...* That means that Dorje Chang is not naked. He has a lot of jewels and silk dresses. The heavenly silk means it is the best possible, material, suitable for gods. It should be able to keep you warm and comfortable, it should be gentle and smooth. All that is meant by the word *dhar*, which is also the word for the scarves you traditionally give. *Surrounded by a beautiful rainbow, you sit in diamond posture, radiant and with every sign and mark.* He is sitting within a rainbow in the diamond posture. This is normally known as lotus posture in the west. Not only that, but he also has the naturally-born 32 major and 80 minor signs.

Audience: (about the subtle body)

Rinpoche: Basically the subtle consciousness is free of negative and positive emotions. It is emotionless, a very neutral state of mind. Remember, the Lamrim *Chenmo* tells us that the state of mind at the point of death cannot be positive or negative, because it is so subtle. It is a neutral state, gone beyond the level of positive or negative. People sometimes refer to it as ‘primordial mind’ or ‘ordinary mind’ or ‘first mind’. This is because it is the totally naked mind, that, up to then, has been covered completely by different thoughts and emotions. When it becomes subtle, it becomes free of all these dresses and make-up. In Tibetan, it is *ta mel gi she pa* which, although directly translated as ‘ordinary’ mind, cannot really be called so. It actually refers to the primordial mind or subtle consciousness, which depends on a certain type of energy, an almost intangible energy, which is referred to as subtle body. In the Tibetan texts, the subtle body is called subtle air and is compared to a horse on which the mind is riding. This is extremely important for us. That is why even at this level, when you generate the field of merit, you generate the

<sup>218</sup> Also see Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 71-73; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 90-91.

Lama, on whose base you do almost all your practices, in this way, acknowledging the subtle body and mind.

Audience: Could you then generate your root guru in the form of Vajrayogini?

Rinpoche: No. According to the Lama Chöpa you should really generate the guru in form of a monk. In the first lines of the nine-round *Migtsema* it actually says *Ngödrup künjung Tubwang Dorjechang*.<sup>219</sup> However, you can change the visualization at the heart level of the Lama, where the concentration being is. Instead of Vajradhara you can generate Heruka, Yamantaka, *etc.*

If you don't want to generate your root guru in the form of a monk, you can generate him in the form of Buddha Vajradhara. It is allowed; the elaborate Lama Chöpa, the one in connection with certain yidams, has separate texts on this. You can generate the lama at the heart level in Yamantaka form, in Guhyasamaja form or in Heruka form.

For example, if you do it with Heruka, then instead of Buddha Vajradhara you would visualize Heruka at the heart level and you would have to change the lines in the root text where it says,

<i>Thuk kar khyap dhah Dor je Chang wang</i>	<i>At your heart is Buddha Dorje Chang,</i>
<i>Zhal chik chah nyi ku doh ngo</i>	<i>Blue in color, one face, two hands,</i>
<i>Dor dril zung ney yeeng chuh mar khyü</i>	<i>Holding vajra and bell,</i>
<i>Lhen kye dhe tong röl pay gway</i>	<i>embracing Yingchukma.</i>

You would change that to:

*Thuk kar khyap dhah **He ru ka pai***  
*Zhal zhi chah nyi **chung nyi ma***  
*Dor dril zung **kyö phagmo le khyü***  
*Lhen kye dhe tong röl pay gway*

*Na ma rü pey gyen kyi de chen*  
*Cha kya tug dang yang dag ne*  
*De nyi jig je dü tsen dhen la*  
*Jag yang kar po nam gyi sho*  
*Kang gi tuk kay chi ten lar sung*  
*Tsa da kar nam nyung gyu le*  
*Chin lab chin gyu kor lo dom ba*  
*Yab yum ka dro ma sung gye*

*Pa wo nyi she pa mo nyi she*  
*Pa nam kong tsa ma gyen gu...*

Those lines will change because Heruka for example has four faces and twelve hands, with his consort Vajrayogini. In the detailed version you go to some extent even a little bit into the body mandala. So the description of Vajradhara will change to the total description of Heruka. There is a separate Tibetan text available. We haven't done that yet. Hopefully we will be able to do that later some time in the near future, we should say. Right now I don't want to go too much into it, because it has tremendous amounts of words in there. I gave a brief overview. That will do for now. The Heruka Lama Chöpa has very elaborate offerings, almost like the Vajrayogini self-initiation. Actually it is the same wordings, the same offering. The whole offering part, of the Vajrayogini self-initiation goes into the Lama Chöpa.

Then you can do the same with Yamantaka:

*Thuk kar khyap dhah **Dor je Jig je***  
*Zhal **go** chah nyi **su che pa***  
*Dor dril zung nay .....*

So the yidam at the heart level of the guru is interchangeable<sup>220</sup> and I believe you can change that to Heruka, Yamantaka and Guhyasamaja. These are the three most important yidams. As for Vajrayogini, I am

<sup>219</sup> *Tupwang* refers to Shakyamuni and *Dorje Chang* to Vajradhara.

<sup>220</sup> Also see p. 310.



sure you can do it, however, there is no system. The best thing is not to create a new system. That would not be right.

### Generating the Principal in the ‘Body Mandala’<sup>221</sup>

*Phung po nam dhang dhe shek nga  
kam zhi yum zhi kye che tza gyü tsik nam chang chup sem pa ngö  
ba pu dra chom nyi tri chik tong yen lah trö wö wang po nyi  
ö zer choh kyong nö jin sang wa jik ten pa nam zhab kyi dhen*

- st.10    **Your purified aggregates are the five [blissful] Buddhas**  
**Your four elements, the four consorts.**  
**Your senses, channels and joints are actually Bodhisattvas.**  
**the hairs of your body are the twenty-one thousand Arhats.**  
**Your limbs the wrathful protectors,**  
**Your light rays, directional guardians,**  
**And all worldly beings are sheltered at your feet.**

The first line is ‘Your purified aggregates are the five blissful Buddhas’. *Dhe shek nga*. Why is ‘blissful’ needed? *Dhe shek* is not necessarily blissful. It should not be in the translation. *Pung po* is the skandhas, *nam dhang* means purified, so the purified skandhas, or, in English, aggregates. You are creating a ‘body mandala’, putting deities on the body of Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang. At the spots where you place the deities, you have to have a seat, either a common or an uncommon seat. The common seat is a multi-colored lotus. The uncommon seat is a sun and moon disc or a chakra. Sitting on these are the Yi-dams. If you can think in the Guhyasamaja style, visualize them with three faces and six arms. If you can’t, even one face and two hands will do, which is easy to meditate.

*The Five Buddhas and consorts.* On the crown of the Lama, inside, in the little empty space underneath the skullcap at the spot where it is a little sensitive if you touch it, you generate Buddha **Vairochana**, the eastern Buddha, in Tibetan *Nangdze Dorje*, who represents the purity of the aggregate of **form**.<sup>222</sup> If you like, you can visualize him with three faces and six hands, or if it is easier, with just one face and two hands. You generate him for the area of the body between the forehead, where the hair line is, up to the crown. The highest part of his physical form is the crown, so you put Vairochana there. What does that mean? Remember, during the initiations you hear, “You have obtained this initiation, purified this, your physical part has been transformed and become Buddha Vairochana.” Vairochana is faultless and ultimate physical appearance. So you can think of the handsomest of all, the cutest of all, the most beautiful of all, but the most important point here is the purity of it; any impurity whatsoever has been totally transformed and become pure. To represent that, you have white Vairochana from forehead to crown of all three beings.

At the throat, at the level of your Adam’s-apple, a little inside, you put Buddha **Amitabha**, the red western Buddha, in Tibetan *Pema Dorje*, the purity of the aggregate of **perception**.<sup>223</sup> The most important activity is the speech activity. So you put Amitabha at the throat level. He covers the area between hair line and throat level. You can also see him with three faces and six arms or with one face and two arms.

At the heart is blue **Akshobya** Buddha, the central Buddha, in Tibetan *Mikyö Dorje*, the purity of the aggregate of **consciousness**.<sup>224</sup> Mind is at the center, so the central Buddha goes to the heart level. Remember, you already have Buddha Vajradhara at the heart level. Therefore, you put Akshobya right in

<sup>221</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 91-98. Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 73-77. For more details on the ‘body mandala’ according to the practice of Guhyasamaja, see Yangchen Gawee Lodoe, *Paths and Grounds of Guhyasamaja According to Arya Nagarjuna*, p. 26-39. Akhu Sherab Gyatso, *Unterweisungen des Schutzherrn Akshobhya*, p. 118-121, 129-132.

<sup>222</sup> Skt. *rupa skandha*; Tib. *gzugs püng-po*.

<sup>223</sup> Skt. *samjna skandha*; Tib. *du-shes püng-po*.

<sup>224</sup> Skt. *vijnana skandha* Tib. *namshes püng-po*.

front of him. You can make Vajradhara a little bigger than Akshobya. Akshobya covers the area from throat to heart.

At the navel you have **Ratnasambhava**, the southern Buddha, in Tibetan *Rinchen Dorje*, yellow. He is the purity of the aggregate of **feeling**.<sup>225</sup> He covers the area from heart to navel.

Covering the area from navel to secret place you put Amoghasiddhi. He is at the secret place, actually at the point where the pubic hair color changes. He is the green northern Buddha, in Tibetan *Dönyö Dorje*, the purity of the aggregate of **motivation**, impulse, or emotion, often called the aggregate of conditioning factors.<sup>226</sup>

This is telling you that the Supreme Field of Merit is not only the three beings but also the five Buddhas, the pure part of the five skandhas. The five skandhas become the five Buddhas. The ordinary body transforms and becomes the eastern Buddha, consciousness transforms and becomes the central Buddha, *etc.* The five emotions become the five wisdoms.<sup>227</sup> This is the great thing in Vajrayana. The transformation takes place on the basis of our ordinary skandhas and emotions. You transform these through the eight stages of the dissolving system. What you get afterwards is the pure parts, the five wisdoms and the five Buddhas. You start with the raw form, go through the process and get the pure form; that is what *nam dhang* means. Just those two syllables give you that message. To show you that process, to symbolize that, you put the five Buddhas on the body.

When you look at Ganchen Rinpoche's healing videotape, all these different colors, seed-syllables and signals of the different Buddhas are given. The source is this Ensapa-tradition.

All the male deities are facing the same direction as the Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang. Actually, you can visualize the body-mandala deities not only in the body of the Lama, the commitment being, but also in that of Shakyamuni Buddha, the wisdom being and in that of Vajradhara, the yidam or concentration being. All three beings have generated their five skandhas in the form of the five Buddhas and their elements in form of the four consorts, *etc.*

*The Four Consorts.* *Kam zhi* are the four elements, earth, water, fire and air. These transform into *yum zhi*, four consorts, the consorts of the five Buddhas. Somewhere you will find the expression *rang nang gi rig ma*, the consort within yourself. We find that very often, but we don't know what it is. While the five skandhas become the five Buddhas, the four elements become their consorts. While the males are facing forward, the female consorts are facing backwards, so that they can go into union.

At the navel is Ratnasambhava and we give him white *Chema*, Sanskrit **Lochana**, as consort. She is the purity of the earth element. At the heart level as the consort of Akshobya is blue **Mamaki**, the purity of the water element. At the throat level, not really in front of but slightly lower than Amitabha, where they say there is some kind of heat circle, sits the purity of the fire, red *Gö Karmo*, Sanskrit **Pandaravasinī**, in a white dress. She is with Amitabha. At the forehead or the crown in front of Vairochana sits the purity of air, green. That consort, whether she is Green Tara or not, is called **Tara**.

When you place the consorts with the Buddhas, don't be quick to get them into union.<sup>228</sup> Just leave them there and let them look at each other. They should not be in union yet. I know that one of them is missing a consort. That will come later.<sup>229</sup> In the *Lama Chöpa* it says *kam zhi yum zhi* and that means the four elements become the four consorts. We can't go and correct the *Lama Chöpa* text and just add a consort. If you have to add up one element, it is the space element. These four purified elements become what is called the four mothers or the four consorts; *yum* can be translated as mother or as consort.

*The bodhisattvas and offering deities.* The next words are *kye che* which means grow and become active. This refers to the **six senses** which arise, remain, and function. *Kye che* refers to the place where they are growing and activated. They are divided into the six inner and outer senses. The inner ones are the actual sense consciousnesses<sup>230</sup> themselves, like eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mental consciousnesses.

<sup>225</sup> Skt. *vedana skandha*; Tib. *tsor-wa püing-po*.

<sup>226</sup> Skt. *samskara skandha*, Tib. *du-je püing-po*. Also see Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 93.

<sup>227</sup> See note 150 on p. 69.

<sup>228</sup> See page 151.

<sup>229</sup> Not taught in the teachings of this transcript.

<sup>230</sup> Or sense powers. Also see: Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness*, p. 221 and 237 and the forthcoming transcript on absolute bodhicitta by Tarab Tulku.

In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition we call the physical parts of the eye, eyeball, retina, *etc.*, the basis of the eye-consciousness. Inside that there is some kind of internal ‘physical ball’. They say that eye, ear, all of the senses are almost sitting and functioning side by side. Whether it is a psychic thing or it is literally there, I do not know, but in the traditional teaching they almost teach you as if it is literally there. Deep inside the eyeballs there is said to be somewhere an extremely tiny, small, shining little ‘pea’ where the actual power of seeing comes from.<sup>231</sup>

The pure sense-consciousnesses become Bodhisattvas. The two eyes then are white **Ksitigarbha**. He is very well known among the Chinese. In English, his name means ‘Essence of the Earth’. He is said to be a Buddha, but appearing as a Bodhisattva. Buddha had eight special Bodhisattva disciples. Ksitigarbha represents eye consciousness. There are two Ksitigarbhas, one for each eye, inside the eyes. Outside the eyes, where the eyeball, retina and so forth. is, you put the white offering deity of form, **Rupa-vajra**, who has the most beautiful physical form imaginable. She is put right in front of the eye-consciousness, for the eye to encounter beauty.

The two ears have two yellow **Vajrapani**s inside. Vajrapani is the holder of the secret treasures. That is in the ears, you can hear it. Near the ear-door you put the yellow offering goddess of music, **Shabdavajra**.

Inside the nose-consciousness, you put the yellow ‘Essence of the sky,’ the Bodhisattva **Akashagarbha**, and near the door the red offering deity of smell, **Gandhavajra**.

At the root of the tongue you put the red Bodhisattva **Avalokiteshvara**, and at the tip of the tongue the green offering deity of taste, **Rasavajra**.

At the heart, you have red **Manjushri**, who represents the mind consciousness. He will sit at the back of Akshobya Buddha and in front of Vajradhara. The offering deity of vajradhatu or space is white *Chöying Dorje*, **Vajradhatuni**.<sup>232</sup>

Body sensation is located at the private parts. If you are male you put the deity at the middle of the vajra. If you are female, I don’t know where you put it, maybe at the equivalent place, where these sensations are. The deity is the green Bodhisattva **Sarvanivarana-viskambini**, *Tibsil*, looking outwards, and at the tip is the blue offering deity of touch, **Parshavajra**.<sup>233</sup>

So, the six senses have each a Bodhisattva in and a offering goddess in front of them. It is very complicated. If somebody could draw all this on the computer, it would be very interesting and a great help for students in future. They could just look at that and get the picture. You could draw the whole physical structure of Lama Lozang and put the deities wherever they belong with appropriate colors. When you just talk, it seems very complicated. If somebody could make such a chart, it would be easier to grasp. Western eyes are trained to look at charts. No matter how complicated, they can look at them page after page, volume after volume. (You can just start and do it. If you want to ask questions, you can do that, but you don’t have to wait for anything. You can just do it. You don’t have to announce that you are going to do it and you don’t have to talk to somebody called ‘Jewel Heart’ and try to find out if you are allowed to do it. Just do it yourself and send it in and make it available for everybody. I don’t think there is a particular person called ‘Jewel Heart’ to answer. There is a group of people called ‘Jewel Heart’, but not a particular person.)

*Tsa gyü* is the channels; *tsig* is joint; *chang chup sem pa* is Bodhisattva. On the crown, above Buddha Vairocana with consort Tara, you have the Bodhisattva *Jam pa*, **Maitreya**, white, who is all the channels. Then, on the twelve major joints in the body – two shoulders, two elbows, two wrists, two hips, two knees, two ankles, there is a green bodhisattva **Samantabhadra**, *Küntu Zangpo*, or you can have one Samantabhadra at the heart level representing all joints, which may be easier.<sup>234</sup>

These Bodhisattvas are the group of eight Bodhisattvas who were direct disciples of the Buddha or in American terms his inner circle. They are Manjushri, Vajrapani, Avalokiteshvara, Ksitigarbha

<sup>231</sup> Explanation Tarab Tulku in *Nearness to Oneself and Openness to the World*: We have five different organs, for five different ways to connect to reality. Form is the object of the seeing sense. We call the physical sense-organ *wangten kopa* and related to that is the seeing sense called *mi ke wangpo*. That is not the same as the organ, it is the energy-level. After that we have the consciousness, *mi ke nampar shepa*. So there are three steps involved: first form goes to the physical organ, that gives it to the seeing sense and that gives it to the seeing consciousness.

<sup>232</sup> Vajradathu Ishvari = Yingchukma. She is not part of the 32 deities of Guhyasamaja. Also see Dalai Lama *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 75, Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 93.

<sup>233</sup> Also written Sparshavajra.

<sup>234</sup> These two bodhisattvas of the veins/nerves and the joints make together with the six bodhisattvas of the six senses the eight bodhisattvas. Pictures of the eight bodhisattvas can be found in Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Meditation Handbook*.

[Essence of Earth], Akashagarbha [Essence of Sky], Samantabhadra [Tib. *Küntu Zangpo*] Maitreya and Sarvanirvarana-viskambini [Tib. *Tibsi*]. In this case Manjushri, Vajrapani, Avalokiteshvara and Maitreya are also counted as Bodhisattvas.

*Ngö* means 'real'. That means that at those places actual Bodhisattvas are functioning. The word *ngö* covers all of them, says they are all actual, reality. In other words, not only did I imagine it, but that is what it is. In absolute reality, it is a Buddha's body. That is why it is an extraordinary body. You see the signs. In the sutra path, you have signs such as the Buddha has an ushnisha this size, his ears are that long *etc.* If a Buddha really appeared with those thirty two major and eighty minor marks, I think everybody would run away because of his appearance. Really true. In Sutrayana, Theravada and sutra Mahayana, you don't find many visualizations. However, they describe the signs in order to tell you they are there. In Vajrayana, they tell you the reality, what it really is. In Vajrayana we put everything under the skullcap, nothing on top. Though Buddhas have an ushnisha and all this, we don't talk about it here. It is all underneath the skull. It is all within the human body; within it every single point has been worked out, and is absolute true reality. This all is covered by the word *ngö*.

Audience: I get confused: Is it the Lama we are describing who has the 'body mandala', not us?

Rinpoche: That's right. We are talking here about the body of Lama Buddha Vajradhara. But whatever he gets, you get. That is exactly what will come in actuality later on. Just now we are generating the field of merit and we are placing the deities on that; we are not talking about ourselves.

*Arhats*. *Ba pu* are the hairs of the pores. (In Tibetan *ba pu* refers not to the hair pores, but to the actual body hair above those pores. If you want to refer to the hair pores themselves you have to say *ba pu kum bu*). *Dra chom* are the Arhats. *Nyi tri chik tong* is twenty-one thousand. So, *the hairs of your body are the twenty-one thousand Arhats*. They're not Theravada Arhats, but Mahayana Arhats, which means Buddhas. The figure twenty-one thousand is just picked up to represent a high figure. All the hairs are Buddhas, each with a complete Buddha pure land. Therefore, there are thousands of pure lands in the body of the Lama. A pure land means the complete mandala of a Buddha with retinue, environment and all that is available in each hair pore. Listening to that you may think, "What kind of fairy tale is this?" It is like a fairy tale. But if you look at it closely, it is almost like in the completion stage. In the completion stage they try to make things as subtle as possible, that is why you get very subtle spaces like hairs in which you can fit the whole universe of a fully enlightened Buddha.

It is interesting. You remember the song of Milarepa in which he talks about how Rechungpa returned from India and thought that he since he had learned a great deal, if he was not better than his master, at least he was equal to him. Milarepa and Rechungpa were walking in the fields when a big storm came with hail and cold winds. Milarepa disappeared and could not be found. Rechungpa got completely soaked. Finally he heard Milarepa singing from within one of those tiny little yak horns. And if you look very carefully, it says that neither the horn became bigger nor did Milarepa shrink, but still he fit in there. It may sound like a fairy tale, but that is how it works. When you can visualize and concentrate properly in that manner, you will get the ability to fit into the yak horn without shrinking your body, nor expanding the yak horn. Impossible things can become possible in that way.

*Wrathful Protectors*. Still on the third line *yen lah* is the limbs and *trö wö* is wrathful. This refers to the ten wrathful deities. Remember, in the Yamantaka long sadhana there is the wrathful protection wheel with the ten wrathful protection deities. All the limbs are those protection deities.

Who are those ten? There is (1) black *Shinje she*, black Yama or **Yamantaka**. That is not the nine-faced Yamantaka; out of the ten wrathful deities there is one called Yamantaka. He is on the palm of the right hand, at the root of the thumb, where there is a joint, facing towards the thumb. Instead of getting arthritis, you put the first wrathful deity there. (2) At the same place on the left hand is white *Shinje mitupa*, in Sanskrit **Aparajita**. In other words, no one can attack you. His name means victory over others. I will just name the others, because it is probably very hard to visualize them or even remember who they are. (3) Dark-blue *Myowa* [Skt. **Achala**] goes on the right shoulder and (4) dark-blue *Döpa Gyelpo* (Skt. **Takkiraja**) goes on the left shoulder. (5-6). The two knees have *Yung wo Je* on the right and *To bo Je* on the left [Skt. **Niladanda** and **Mahabala**, both blue]. (7) On the crown is yellowish green *Tsudro khorlo gyurba*, **Ushnisha Chakravartin**, whom you should visualize above the Bodhisattvas Maitreya and Buddha Vairocana with Tara. He is lying flat on the back, facing towards the sky and

very wrathful. This is an important point. Of course, everything is important, but here the important point is that if you meditate that strongly on Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang or Lama Dorjechang's body, it protects you from having a stroke. They say it almost guarantees you that. (8) Between tongue and lips is red **Hayagriva**. [Tib. *Tamdin*] (9) Underneath the two soles of the feet you have two *Ngonje gyalpo*, blue **Sumbaraja**. They are standing inside the soles; you don't step on them, they are inside. (10) At the sex-organs, below Amoghasiddhi, you have blue *Dutzi gyewa*, **Amritakundalini**.<sup>235</sup>

The word *nyi* here and the word *ngö* in the sentence before mean about the same thing. *Nyi* means 'that is reality', 'that it is'. Emptiness is called *tong nyi*.<sup>236</sup>

*Extraordinary perception.* Now you know that when you are talking about the Lama, you are not talking about just one guy. You are really talking about all of these. If you can, it is recommended that you meditate or focus on their hand-implements, their colors and everything according to the Guhyasamaja practice.<sup>237</sup> If you can. If not, doesn't matter. At our level what we can do in practice, is think they are there. You need to know they are there and then, when you read the text, you can think that they are there. That will serve the purpose.

The whole idea is that from above the skullcap to below the soles of the feet, the entire body of Lama Buddha Vajradhara is occupied. Buddhas are occupying it, consorts are occupying it, Bodhisattvas and wrathful deities are; there is nothing left over. Everything, every single part of the body is totally covered by different Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, wrathful deities and consorts. And each one of them is also nothing strange that is brought in, it is purity. Purity in the sense that when during the path-level you work hard and you meditate the different points it will become that way. It is what Atisha meant when he said, 'You Tibetans think that your lamas are just ordinary human beings. How can you expect to grow any development?' This meditation will help not to think like that. You are generating the Lama with the three beings, one within one and then another one within that. Not only that, each of these is being generated into five Buddhas and consorts and Bodhisattvas and Arhats, and so forth. Through these the ordinary perception and conception to which we are so much the subject, into which we are born, are counteracted. Somehow an extraordinary perception comes in.

This is why Tibetan Buddhism has so many different points; this meditation going over here, that meditation going over there, so many of them, each one separately packaged, and an order to all of them. It is not like any other path. It is very much unlike any of those new-age types of hotchpotch with everything mixed together. That doesn't work at all. The simple reason is that when it actualizes, when you become fully enlightened, each one of them will take its proper place. That is why order is necessary, and completeness is necessary. Otherwise you are going to be a Buddha with left-outs, with something missing here and there. Because when there is no cause, where is the result going to come from? That's why there is order and different types. All of them are necessary.

It is complicated, however, you are building a fully enlightened being which is going to be yourself. Just now you have started by placing deities on the body of the Lama, but later, when you actualize that, *you* become that way. That's what it is. So it is important to find them. That's why the words are there to say, so that at least you don't miss anything. If there were no words, then whatever you like you would pick up and whatever you don't like you wouldn't pick up, you'd just conveniently or actually forget. That is what happens.

*Directional Guardians.*<sup>238</sup> The fourth line. *Özer* is the light that radiates from his body. These rays are the *nö jin sang wa*, the **four directional protectors**; when you mention the northern and eastern one, the two others are included. Sometimes this is translated as 'lord of wealth and attendants', but it is supposed to be a type of protector. In the Hindu-Buddhist mythology he is the commander of the bodyguards of the chakravartin-*raja*<sup>239</sup>, who are supposed to protect all Bodhisattvas as well. That particular

<sup>235</sup> The colors between brackets are copied from the Yamantaka long sadhana. Yangchen Gawai Lodoe's *Paths and Grounds of Guhyasamaja*, p. 38, gives slight differences, e.g. Ushnisha Chakravartin being blue. Pictures: Hayagriva: R. Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion, The Sacred Art of Tibet*, on p. 189; G.W. Essen, *Die Götter des Himalaya*, vol. I p. 171; Achala: G.W. Essen, *Die Götter des Himalaya*, vol. I p. 160-161, vol. II, p. 138-139. Takkiraja: same, vol. I p. 162.

<sup>236</sup> Often written *stong pa nyid*, Skt. *shunyata*.

<sup>237</sup> For their details see the references in note 221.

<sup>238</sup> About samsaric and non-samsaric protectors, also see Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasure of Merit*, p. 95-96.

<sup>239</sup> Chakravartin means universal ruler; *chakra* is wheel, *raja* is king.

guy looks like Vajrapani, a vajra in his hand. He *is* the protector of wealth, he *is* the protector of life, because his job is to protect the Bodhisattvas as well as to do the military work for the chakravartin. So you see, the translators can translate it the way they want to, because it is applicable in that way.

*Choh kyong*, **fifteen directional protectors**. Included in this category are the different directional protectors, like in the south-east the fire god, in the south Yama, in the west the water god, in the north west the air god, in the north east *Jumbo rolang*, a kind of zombini. These are actually mean, wrathful and powerful ones who have been tamed by Yamantaka and have now become directional protectors. Above is Brahma, sun, and moon, and under the ground is the goddess of the earth and others. In the Yamantaka practice you have this OM BHUCARANAM YA PATALA...<sup>240</sup>; these are the fifteen directional protectors. Especially OM I HRIH YA SHTRIH VA...<sup>241</sup> is talking about them. These fifteen directional protectors are anything that is powerful in the Hindu-Buddhist mythological world; Brahma, Indra, the sun, the moon *etcetera*. If you look into their system, they systematically divide all existence into 'spheres of influence'. In our human lands, we package continents and nations like US, Canada, Europe, and Asia. Within these, there are groups of people, each with their own leader. Likewise, they divide the whole of psychic existence completely between the fifteen protectors, each of whom is some kind of supervisor, president or foreman, whatever you call it. You mention these fifteen, because all others are supposed to follow under their jurisdiction. Those fifteen are supposed to be responsible to make sure everything they decided or committed to do is carried out. That is why they are called directional protectors. So the radiating light is the directional protectors.

*Jik ten pa nam* is worldly beings or worldly gods, like Brahma, Indra, Vishnu and all those powerful well-known Hindu gods. *Zhab* is feet and *den* is like a carpet under the feet. All samsaric beings in the six realms are under Lama Lozang's feet. In the tree trunk beneath the throne are the three lower realms, on the lotus-leaves are human beings, in the middle of the sun mandala the demi-gods and at the center of the moon disc the samsaric gods. So, one way of explaining is that Lama Lozang sits above all the six realms.

Another way of explaining emphasizes a most important point I think Kyabje Ling Rinpoche also stressed: to call the samsaric gods a carpet or cushion for the feet means that they do not even get the opportunity to put the highest point of their body to the lowest point, the feet, of Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang. That is why they are called 'but cushions for your feet'.

So, this last point, *jik ten pa nam zhab kyi den*, also shows the preciousness of Lama Dorjechang. Even the well-known samsaric gods are unable to put their highest part of their body to the lowest part, the feet, of the Lama, who is thus important, rare and precious. The word *rinpoche*, this 'precious' business, actually comes from this. Of course now it is commonly used, another buzz-word, but originally it comes from this level.

This information is shared at this point because first, it is reality, and second, it also tells you that there is nothing that goes beyond or is higher than Lama Buddha Vajradhara. Nothing. We sometimes get the idea, "I can bypass Lama Buddha Vajradhara, I make a deal with Yamantaka directly, I'll deal with the Buddha directly, I don't need an agent here." We do have these sorts of thoughts, you know. We do have the idea of trying to avoid or bypass the lama. So, these words send a strong message: there is no other Buddha or Yidam or Bodhisattva better, higher, or more important than Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang or Lama Dorjechang. Okay? Also, as we said above, this verse shows you that the body of future enlightened beings is produced this way, too.

This completes the generation of the 'body mandala'.<sup>242</sup> Putting deities on the body of the Lama shows you that all objects of refuge can be collected in one object. In this case, it is not just objects of refuge, but the whole of existence, samsaric existence included. So it is a basis on which you can practice compassion, a basis on which you practice generosity, a source of refuge, something to look up to. It is all in one. Even within the principal you have everything included, and you still have the retinue to come. You

<sup>240</sup> For their names see Gehlek Rimpoche, *Solitary Yamantaka Teachings on the Generation Stage*, Ch. II.

<sup>241</sup> Idem.

<sup>242</sup> The thirty-two deities of the body mandala according to Guhyasamaja are: 5 dhyani buddhas, 4 consorts, 8 bodhisattvas, 5 offering deities, 10 protectors. Chart on page 363. For literature see note 221.

don't really need to list them, but they are there. If you can't visualize them, you can leave them out and they are still included when you meditate on the principal and the deities on his body.

It is the same thing in Vajrayogini and Yamantaka. In the Vajrayogini practice, it is just a little shorter: The light radiates out, brings the wisdom beings in, they dissolve and each of the lamas becomes a complete collection of everything. Here it is done in a more elaborate way. Sometimes, doing it in a more elaborate way will draw one's attention.

*Meeting hall.* One more important thing I want to share with you. What is the body of the Lama? It is the base. One of the great teachers in this particular lineage was asked, "What is the body of the Lama?" The teacher said, "You don't know? Didn't you ever get in there? It is the meeting hall of all enlightened beings, their lounge. It is the place where they come in and go out, where they hang out and meet." That means it is the place where you concentrate, where you do all your activities. It is the meeting hall of the enlightened beings. You have to look at it *that* way. It is *not* what you project, nor what it looks like. It is the basis provided for them to be there, to function there, to come, to go, to sit, sleep, eat, shit, whatever they want to do. Really it is their meeting-hall.

Audience: Is it the job of the person who is meditating the *Lama Chöpa*, to place these deities here, or is it enough to acknowledge that when we visualize the Lama here and we are doing this practice, in reality he is all of these things?

Rinpoche: At the beginning level, just think he is or she is all of those; that is fine. After a little while, you have to get more and more clear about it, little by little. Do not try to get it absolutely clear from the beginning. If you do so, you'll never say a *Lama Chöpa*. So it doesn't matter now, "It is all there," will do.

### Generating the Retinue<sup>243</sup>

*tha kor rim zhin ngö gyü la ma  
yi dam kyil kor lha tsok dhang  
sang gyay chang sem pa wo kha dro  
ten sung gya tsö kor nay zhuh ...*

- st. 11. **You are encircled by a sea of root and lineage lamas, yidams,  
Mandala deities, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas,  
Heroes, Dakinis and Dharma protectors ...**

You have Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang right in front of you. But he is not his own one-man show; he is surrounded by all these other beings. What is the difference between yidams and mandala deities in the context of this translation? Let's just keep yidams and leave out mandala deities in the translation. In the Tibetan they had to add up *kyil kor lha tsok* to make up the meter. They needed the extra three syllables.

**Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang** now radiates light from his heart into the space right in front of him. There you generate your own **root master**, as you see him every day. If he is alive, that is fine. If he is not alive, you see him as he was when alive. Your root master is surrounded by all the other masters from which you have taken direct teachings. That is one group or circle.

Then, light radiates from the heart of the Lama and goes next to his right side. There is orange Maitreya Buddha with the **vast lineage**.<sup>244</sup> Then to his left is orange Manjushri surrounded by the **profound lineage**.<sup>245</sup> For the profound and the vast lineage you can have either Manjushri and Maitreya, or Manjushri on both. That both lineages have Manjushri is because of *Mahamudra*, which likes to include Manjushri as much as possible. Actually between Manjushri and Maitreya is not a big difference.

Then the Lama generates light to a little above and there is the root master and his master and so forth, the whole teaching **lineage** [of the Lama Chöpa] up to Buddha Vajradhara and they all are in Man-

<sup>243</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 98-107. Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 77-88. For a rather complete list of the figures of the Merit-field, see Pabongka, *Liberation in Our Hands*, vol. I, p. 248. Also see the picture of the thangka at the beginning of this transcript.

<sup>244</sup> The method-part. For the names of the 51 masters of the vast lineage see: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 99.

<sup>245</sup> For the names of the 46 masters of the profound lineage see: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 101.

jushri form, except Buddha Vajradhara.<sup>246</sup> If you can, the lineage masters have each their teachings in the form of books beside or behind them.

Now comes the **lotus**, which has eleven layers. Artists can't show this in their drawings, but each layer of petals should be twice as big and high as the previous one.

Coming down from the top, on the [four petals of the] first layer, you have the most important *maha anu yoga tantra* deities, **Guhyasamaja** on the [petal to Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang's] right, **Yamantaka** in the center [*i.e.* the petal in front], **Heruka** at the petal at his left, and **Hevajra** at the petal behind. The order does not matter so much, people switch them back and forth.<sup>247</sup> If you can, above each of them in space visualize all the lineage masters of that practice.<sup>248</sup>

On the second layer of petals are Kalachakra, Vajrayogini, and the other *maha anu yoga tantra* deities. On the third layer of petals you have the deities of *yoga tantra*. On the fourth, you have the deities of *charya tantra*. On the fifth, the deities of *kriya tantra*.

On the sixth, you have the 1000 Buddhas, the 35 purification Buddhas, the eight medicine Buddhas, the ten directional Buddhas, and so forth. Not Buddha Shakyamuni; he is at the guru level. On the seventh, all the Bodhisattvas, Avalokiteshvara, Manjushri, Vajrapani, *etc.* In reality they are enlightened beings, but here they appear as Bodhisattvas. On the eighth petal are Arhats such as the twelve self-liberated Arhats and the different Arhat-Sanghas. Arhats are divided into two categories, the *pratyeka buddhas* and the *shravaka buddhas*. These are the *pratyeka buddhas*. On the ninth petal are the *shravaka buddhas*, like the sixteen arhats, *etc.* On the tenth petal are the *dakas* and *dakinis*, the Vajrayana Sangha. Because we are a Vajrayana Sangha, we can call ourselves Sangha from this angle, too, so we are Dakas, we are Dakinis.

On the eleventh petal are the non-samsaric Dharma protectors,<sup>249</sup> like the different forms of Mahakala, Dharma-king Chögyal,<sup>250</sup> Vaisravana,<sup>251</sup> and Palden Lhamo.<sup>252</sup> In the east is the six-armed Mahakala<sup>253</sup> and Dharma king Chögyal, in the south Guhyasamaja's protector, in this case the four-faced Mahakala, in the west the Hevajra protector, the Mahakala tent, in the north Chakrasamvara's protector which is again the four-faced Mahakala. Then, if you want to put all other non-samsaric protectors in there, you can do that.

You have to remember one very important thing here. All the figures of the field of merit are manifestations of Lama Dorjechang, each one of them. Or you can say Lama Dorjechang is made of all these Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Protectors; they are linked. This is very important: he manifests them and they *are* him.

One of the points that should be emphasized here is that no Buddha or yidam is more important than Lama Vajradhara. That is why, even on your altar which is your field of merit, you consider the Lama the most important and put him on top; then come the Yidams, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas. Perhaps we sometimes do it the other way around, but that should not be done. If you do it wrong, it is a bad omen. A commonly known example is when Naropa showed the mandala to Marpa. You know all these stories.<sup>254</sup> That's why this is the main point.

<sup>246</sup> Also see Dalai Lama, *Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 77-88, Pabongka, *Liberation in Our Hands*, vol. I p. 181-182, 242-248; Pabongka, *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, p. 194, Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 103. Also compare this to the uncommon refuge tree on page 50.

<sup>247</sup> See for the possibilities of changing places Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 80 and Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit* p. 103.

<sup>248</sup> So you visualize them as a columns around the principal. See: Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 80.

<sup>249</sup> Especially the protectors of the three scopes, see p. 26. Translations of the prayers of those protectors in R. Thurman, *Essential Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 274-278.

<sup>250</sup> Also called Yama Dharmaraja or Inner Yama. Picture: J. Landaw and A. Weber, *Images of Enlightenment*, plate 21. Picture of outer Yama and description of outer, inner, secret and ultimate Yama in R. Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion, The Sacred Art of Tibet*, p. 290-291.

<sup>251</sup> Picture: J. Landaw and A. Weber, *Images of Enlightenment*, plate 15, R. Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion, The Sacred Art of Tibet*, p. 305 and G.W. Essen, *Die Götter des Himalaya*, p. 235.

<sup>252</sup> Skt. Kali Devi. For the significance of Palden Lhamo see Dalai Lama, *Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 84-85. Picture: R. Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion, The Sacred Art of Tibet*, p. 300, 303.

<sup>253</sup> Picture: J. Landaw and A. Weber, *Images of Enlightenment*, plate 26; Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion, The Sacred Art of Tibet*, p. 296.

<sup>254</sup> The story is told on page 27.



*Samsaric protectors.* You do not normally put the samsaric protectors in the merit field. Even though a few people may have a very special protector they think very important, you don't put them in the field of merit. That is because if they themselves are not properly enlightened, how can they be objects of refuge? However, there is a very interesting question. One lama from Kham, east Tibet, I think it was the previous Samdong Rinpoche, wrote a letter to Pabongka, the famous Dechen Nyingpo. In this letter he wrote,

I have been repeatedly told by you that no samsaric deities are allowed up there. But when I do my protector pujas, in the Kham puja it says that Mahakali is nothing less than Vajrayogini. Then when I do the puja for the five King Brothers, there are certain words indicating that they are totally enlightened beings and when I do the Setrabpa protector puja, it indicates that he is the ultimate object of refuge. When I do the protector Shugden's prayer, it says that there is no protector more powerful than he. This is very uncomfortable for me, so please kindly explain.

This letter came to my notice just three, four days before the retreat. In reply, Pabongka said,

Yes, each one of them is a manifestation and they manifest in samsaric wrathful forms. In my case, I have no problem at all in considering Mahakali as Vajrayogini and the five King Brothers as the five Buddhas. Setrabpa<sup>255</sup> is Amitabha Buddha and Dorje Shugden is Manjushri in wrathful form, Yamantaka. I have no difficulty with that. In addition to that, Trichen Tenpa Rabgye (one of the early Ganden Tripas) took teachings from one protector in trance called Lama Tsangpa. This Lama Tsangpa is considered to be a samsaric protector, but Trichen Tengpa Rabgye took teachings from him when he was in trance, so he treated Lama Tsangpa as one of his gurus. He did not have any problems doing that, so you should not have any problem either.

Pabongka did not use exactly these words, but these are the points he made in his return message.

In reality, for us it is better not to judge much when we deal with those well-known protectors. We may hear that some are great and some are bad, but better not make any judgment at all. Whatever is your personal inclination, follow that, and then look at the one you follow as fully enlightened Vajrayogini or Yamantaka or Guhyasamaja or the five Buddhas or whatever. Let it be in that manner rather than going into complicated positions. In the case of Dorje Shugden, there are some complications these days. It is quite well-known that His Holiness the Dalai Lama objects to the practice of Dorje Shugden, but there are many great teachers, including Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche, that have practiced Dorje Shugden.

As for western Dharma students, they are better off just being Dharma students. Whatever practice you are connected with, do it and follow it and don't get involved in this type of controversy. Since we were talking about samsaric and non-samsaric protectors, I wanted to mention that.

Nobody argues with the refuge tree, that is fine. The only argument is who should be put in there and who should not. Then comes, "Mine should be in there, not yours." This should not be done. I have some hesitation about passing all this information on to you, but if I don't, you will read about it somewhere and get a big shock. Sometimes Dharma also has its politics. It is not free of politics any more. So just simply do your practice wherever you are.

The very same sort of thing is happening with the recognition of reincarnate lamas, for example the Karmapa. It does not matter whether the young boy recognized by Situ Rinpoche or the one recognized by the Sharmapa is the right one. We should acknowledge both their choices. Nobody questions either Sharma or Situ themselves. So, whomever they recognize, I am sure, both are right. His Holiness the Dalai Lama officially recognized Situ Rinpoche's selection as the official Karmapa and, at the same time, he made a statement that Sharmapa's recognition is also a Karmapa. So that is okay. It does not matter, just don't get involved in fighting.

Now we are going to have a controversy with the Panchen Lama, too. In the case of the Panchen Lama, he is Amitabha Buddha and I am sure that, unless the candidate, whoever he is, has some kind of Amitabha Buddha's influence or touch or 'gene' or something, he will find it hard to sit on the throne of the Panchen Lama. So, no matter what happens, whoever it may be, there must be some kind of his 'gene' in both of the new Panchen Lamas. Let us also not get involved in that controversy, but let it be. I am sure His Holiness is not wrong, I am one hundred per cent sure of that. But you cannot deny the other

<sup>255</sup> Setrapchen, special protector of Gehlek Rinpoche, Nyare Kamtse and Jewel Heart. Prayer composed by Gehlek Rinpoche in Jewel Heart prayer book; description and picture: R. Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion, The Sacred Art of Tibet*, p. 308-309.

one either, because he has become official and also has been selected in the traditional system. So let's not talk about it. You know, you are supposed to look at all sentient beings, male and female, as enlightened beings. So why not accept the incarnate ones? Let it be. This might not be the wrong place to mention this.

Outside the throne are the four directional kings as four directional protectors, sort of Buddha's personal protectors. The eastern king is called *Yukor Sung*, Dhrtarastra; the southern one is *Pakyebo*, Virudhaka; the western one is *Chenmisang*, Virupaksha; and the northern one is *Namdösa*, Vaisravana. Thus we have completed the field of merit.<sup>256</sup>

## 2. Inviting and Dissolving the Wisdom Beings<sup>257</sup>

... *dhe dhah go sum dor je sum tsen HUNG yik ö zer chak kyu yi*  
*rang zhin nay nay ye shei pa nam chen drang yeer mey ten par gyur*

st. 11... **Their three doors marked by OM AH HUM,**  
**From HUM hooking light rays invite the wisdom beings**  
**From their natural abodes to remain inseparable.**

Each one of the beings of the merit field has OM, AH, HUM, representing vajra-body, vajra-speech and vajra-mind. [*go sum* is three doors; *dor je sum* is three vajras]. From the heart-level of all the beings in the merit field light radiates and invites the wisdom beings. This light, *ö zer*, is hook-shaped. Like when you use a hook to catch a fish, you are going to 'fish for' all those enlightened beings. Where are you inviting them from? From their natural place, their 'natural abode', *rang zhin nay nay*, the actual *dharmadhatu*, *rang zhin chö ying*. When you have first become enlightened, you become sort of part of a huge galaxy of all-knowing consciousness, remember?<sup>258</sup> I believe that is referring to the natural abode, *dharmadhatu*. From there, you manifest in a form suitable to each individual's capability, understanding, need, requirements, willingness, and wish.

### *Invocation Meditation*

You yourself are in Yidam-form or Lama-form, with a letter HUM at your heart. Each beings of the merit field is marked by OM – AH – HUM.



Now you are going to invite the wisdom beings. What kind of wisdom beings are you inviting? You are going to invite all of those you have meditated on, whoever you have projected, every one of them. You want them to become one-ness with the ones you have imaginatively provided. In your visualization you not only have the Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang, but also the lineage masters and all others, just like in the thangka of the Lama Chöpa merit field. Every bit and piece of the Lama's body is either the five Buddhas, the four consorts, the wrathful deities or the Bodhisattvas or the Arhats. Even his channels, limbs, joints and each part of his body is a yidam by itself. On the whole, his physical body, which we can see, is a bag full of enlightened beings. They are all in that one little red bag of skin.

Not only that. Each one of the other figures is in absolute reality a vajra body marked by the letter OM. The OM indicates the vajra body. The AH at their throat level indicates that their speech is vajra speech. The letter HUM at their heart level gives us the message that their mind is vajra mind. Each and every one of them, while being an individual person, is one-ness with the total enlightened bliss-void inseparable nature.

<sup>256</sup> Pictures: G.W. Esse, *Die Götter des Himalaya*, vol I p. 230-31; H.W. Schumann, *Buddhistische Bilderwelt*, p. 167-170.

<sup>257</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 107-113. Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 88-91.

<sup>258</sup> See page 70.

To satisfy my normal mind, they radiate hook-shaped light from their hearts and invite the wisdom beings. Light goes not only from the Supreme Field of Merit, but also from each part and parcel of the Lama's body. That goes for the Lama commitment being, the Lama wisdom being and the Lama concentration being. Every part of his body, wherever there are all these beings, is invited as wisdom beings. They [will] dissolve with them and become one-ness.

If you find it inconvenient to have Lama Dorjechang on a throne, you can invite him, I am quite sure, on a nice sofa-seat. True, why not? You can have a merit-field suited to Western culture. Instead of putting a bunch of thrones up there, you can visualize sofas with everybody sitting on a sofa and talking to each other. You can imagine your field of merit that way. I don't see any reason why not. In reality, the merit field is the manifestation of the Lama; the Lama is part of them and they are part of the Lama; they are the Buddha, the Buddha is them; they are the Yidam, the Yidam is them; they are Dakas, Dakinis, each one of them; there is no separation. So, if you want to make a new tree with all sorts of different men and women, sitting on sofas, talking, it would be okay. (Perhaps not smoking; maybe you can give them 'grass', that's probably okay!)

Audience: Is this merit field exactly the same as explained in Pabongka's Lamrim, except for the central figure?

Rinpoche: The Lama Chöpa tree and the Lamrim tree are almost the same. Pabongka's Lamrim tree is the most recent version, and it differs slightly from this one, but that is okay, it doesn't matter. Pabongka has this southern tradition, so it is slightly different. Also, there is a place for you yourself to go; that is why there is an empty space.<sup>259</sup>

*chö nam rang zhin dro ong kün drel yang  
na tsok dhul jay sam pa ji zhin dhu  
chir yang char way kyen tsei trin lay chen  
kyap gön dham pa khor chay sheg su söl*

st. 13. **In nature, phenomena are free of coming or going,  
Yet you appear, performing deeds of perfect love and knowledge,  
To suit the needs of various disciples.  
Great Protectors with your circle, please come here now.**

The invocation now. In the LTWA-translation the verse *phün tsoh dhe lek* comes first.<sup>260</sup> In the version we have provided for this retreat, we have put the verse *chö nam rang zhin* first. This order is not new, but was used by Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche and even before by Pabongka Rinpoche and Dagpo Lama Rinpoche. (This is the southern business, so the yankees may not like it.) But that is how it goes. Also, we switched *rab kar ge sem* and *dhe chen nang lay*, as you noticed earlier. This again is the southern style and there are a lot of reasons to do it this way.

Why do we do the invocation? Although the lights have gone out and have done the invitation, our human rational mind is such that it is never satisfied, even if the living Buddha came in his actual form right in front of us. We would be doubting, wondering what that is. We would ask ourselves whether it was a hallucination, our imagination or an evil manifestation. We will never be able to satisfy our rational mind. That is why again, we recite these verses of invocation.

*In nature, phenomena are free of coming or going.* The nature of all phenomena is what? Emptiness. Therefore, the question of coming and going does not rise. You know what this question of coming and going really means? For example, when you look in a mirror, you will see your reflection. If you don't think about it (and because we know what a mirror is), it reflects immediately, right? If you did not know immediately how it reflects, you would have to go into the mirror and look out, and you would have to get out of the mirror and look into it. If you do not understand the reflecting business, that is what you would have to do to comprehend it. That is the coming and going business actually.

When you talk about all phenomena here, you are talking about samsaric existence and non-samsaric existence, both. All of them are actually empty by their nature. All phenomena we touch, hear,

<sup>259</sup> In the category of the lamas right and left is an empty space.

<sup>260</sup> In the Jewel Heart translation it does come first as well.

smell and feel, are in their nature empty. Such a naturally pure emptiness is always one taste with joy. Such a joy inseparable from emptiness has no limitations. There is no point where you see or don't see [it]. It has no place that can never be reached. It is always here. Therefore the question of coming and going does not apply. That is the reality. Also the mind which acknowledges any phenomena is in empty nature. There is no place where it has never been. It has been there all the time. From the point of the object as well as from the point of the observer, the subject, from all angles in nature there is nothing such as going or coming.

You know why coming and going is used here as an example? Because you are inviting the wisdom beings. You are saying to them, 'I like to invite you, but I know you are always there. You are omnipresent. So you are always there. There is no question of coming and going for you. However, I like to invite you.' Our rational mind has so many different neuroses, doubts and thoughts. To satisfy the rational mind of the disciple you say,

In accordance with our understanding of the invitation, would you please appear and perform the deeds of perfect love and knowledge to suit the needs of various disciples!

This is the most difficult part. There is also an invocation to Manjushri from the [Thirteen-deity]-Yamantaka sadhana which goes into the same direction.<sup>261</sup> It starts with. *Jam bel rang zhin chö nam kun gyi ngo ne me dro wo dawa nam kar chen*. That means that Manjushri's nature is the nature of all phenomena. All phenomena are the same as Manjushri. They are like the sky. There is nothing that can stay, come or go. There is only space – there is nothing. It is like the sky. We cannot say that the sky is coming or going. Whatever you do, whatever you build, whenever you find open space, it is already there. It does not matter whether you are inside the room or outside the room. You even have space inside your palm, inside your bed. Whatever you do, space is there. There is no question of space coming in or going out. The nature of all existence is like that. And that is the nature of Manjushri.<sup>262</sup>

So, in one way, the nature of emptiness has nothing coming, nothing going; in another way it reflects as it is. You don't have to put efforts in to get your reflection into the mirror. The usual example in Buddhism is the reflection of the moon; when the moon shines, every bit of water on earth, each river, each lake, each pond, reflects it without any effort on the moon's part. When the moon shines, it automatically reflects. You don't have to put in any efforts; you don't have to come and you don't have to go.

In other words there are two points: since the nature of phenomena has no going or coming, (a) it is there all the time and (b) it is automatic, effortless.

Audience: That doesn't mean inherent existence, does it?

Rinpoche: No! Whatever is there, is dependent. If there is no water, you can't see a reflection. There is no inherent existence, don't worry about it. Just forget inherent, primordial, and all of them for a while.

Audience: If I don't have a point of reference then there is no coming and no going.

Rinpoche: And if you have a point of reference ?

Audience: Then there is coming toward and going away from that point.

Rinpoche: That is the idea. The moon doesn't come out from anywhere, it suddenly appears in the water because it is there. That gives you another understanding in the nature of enlightened beings – they are everywhere. There is no place from where you can say that they are not there. Like in Christian language: God is everywhere. It refers to this. As I have always told you: the reason why God is everywhere is because the frequency of enlightened ones (whether you label them God or not is up to the individual) is different from ours. Their way of functioning differs from ours because their body and mind function together and ours function separately. We need time between the body experiencing something and the mind experiencing it. The body experiences, the consciousness is informed, the mind acknowledges and observes. There is a time involved. We all know that.

<sup>261</sup> O Manjushri, your nature the reality of all things, Abodeless, free of coming and going like space, Your compassion neither comes nor goes, like time, Your emanations progress free like mirror images, Though unaffected by any sign of coming and going, You are seen wherever one looks, like moon in water. Now invited here, O God, I pray for you to come, As Manjughosha, intuitive wisdom of all Buddhas, As Bhairava Yamantaka, to tame all devils, With your Yama retinue, emanated agents, Come hither, attend to me, pray take your place. (JH Self-initiation sadhana of Yamantaka, pg.130)

<sup>262</sup> Also see Gehlek Rinpoche, *Solitary Yamantaka Teachings on the Generation Stage*, Ch. VIII.

There is a tremendous connection between body and mind. If there were no connection how would the completion-stage chakra- and channel exercises affect the individual? Also hatha-yoga or even a physical walk, affects the individual. Like I was pushed to walk yesterday. Even though it is a little bit hard, at the end you will be happy. So body exercise makes the mind happy.

However, *to suit the needs of various disciples*. Note that it says needs rather than moods. Sometimes our moods are so bad and it will never be right, so needs are more important than moods. *Yet you appear*. ‘Whatever the need is, may you manifest as it is, like reflections of the moon in all directions.’ *Chir yang char wei* means ‘as you have seen it.’ *Performing deeds of perfect love and knowledge*. *Kyen* is the knowledge or wisdom part of it, *tsei*<sup>263</sup> is the compassion part of it, *trin le*<sup>264</sup> is the activity part of it. ‘You manifest according to whatever the need of the individual is, by your kindness, by your wisdom, by your activity.’ That’s what it is.

‘You, the great protector, *kyap gön*, with your retinue, may you come here.’ So you are inviting them from the Dharmakaya into physical form.<sup>265</sup> That is why you put this verse first.

*Pün tsoh dhe lek jung nay dhü sum gyi  
tsa gyü la ma yi dham kön choh sum  
pa wo kha dro chö kyong sung tsoh chey  
thuh jay wang gi dhir shek ten par zhuk.*

st. 12. **You are the source of all happiness and joy:  
Root and lineage lamas, yidams, Three Jewels,  
Heroes, dakinis, and dharma protectors.  
Out of your great compassion, please come here to stay.**

*Pün tsoh* means all the best, *pün* and *tsoh* each carry different messages, but I am not going to explain that. *Pün* and *tsok* almost mean the same thing. Our translation says *happiness and joy*. This part actually tells you that this is the source of all good and joy. Where does actually the joy of samsara and non-samsara come from? It comes from our positive karma, our positive work. Where does my ability to create positive karma come from? It comes from my guru. My guru taught me the karmic system. So the guru is the source of my joy and happiness. Through him I came to know that from positive actions come positive results and from negative actions come negative results. And not only the root master, but the same goes for all the root and lineage masters of past, present and future.

You are talking not about just one Lama, but about Lama Buddha Vajradhara, who is the Lama of all three times, past, present and future, and about all the deities, *yidams*, of all the four different classes of tantra. You are also talking about the Three Jewels, *kön chok sum*. That includes Buddha who has purified everything that needs to be purified, who has gained the complete spiritual development that can be gained. That is what Buddha really means. The Dharma means the relative and the absolute Dharma. The relative Dharma is the information; the absolute Dharma is the spiritual development. Then it is also the Sangha, the Theravadin sangha, the Arhats, the Mahayana sangha, the Bodhisattvas, and the Vajrayana sangha, the Heroes, *pawo*, the Dakinis, *khadro*, and the Dharma-Protectors *chö kyong*. The last line says, ‘May you come by your compassion and remain here.’ In our translation, since we already mention the Three Jewels, there is no need to count Buddhas and Bodhisattvas again. We deleted these two. One could delete the heroes and dakinis as well, however, the Tibetan root text mentions them directly. But *Buddhas and Bodhisattvas* is not mentioned in the Tibetan text. Now you are invoking their compassion. You are saying, ‘I have nothing to give you, but because of your compassion, your concern, your responsibility, please come!’

Where the previous verse invited them from the *Dharmakaya* to the *Rupakaya*, this verse invites the enlightened beings from the *Sambhogakaya* to the *Nirmanakaya*-form,<sup>266</sup> and then asks them to remain. That is why the verses were put in this order by the southern lineage.

<sup>263</sup> *Tsei* is also to be found in the first line of the Migtsema, *kyen* in the second line.

<sup>264</sup> Part of Rinpoche’s name, there translated as virtuous conduct.

<sup>265</sup> *Rupakaya*.

<sup>266</sup> See note 203.

OM GURU BUDDHA BODHISATTVA DHARMAPALA SAPARIWARA  
 E HYA HIH DZA HUM BAM HO  
 ye shei pa nam dham tsik pa dhang nyi su may par gyur.

- st. 14. **OM GURU BUDDHA BODHISATTVA DHARMAPALA SAPARIVARA  
 E HYA HIH! – DZAH HUM BAM HOH!  
 The wisdom and commitment beings become one.**

This is very simple. You know Guru, Buddha and Bodhisattvas. Dharmapalas are the protectors and *sapariwara* means retinue. *E hya hih* means really ‘Hey, come, come here!’

Those you invite are the wisdom beings, and those you have visualized in front of you are the commitment beings.

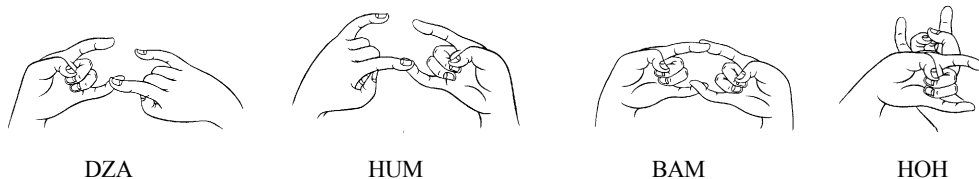
Either you visualize that each one of the commitment beings has OM AH HUM on their three doors, at the forehead, throat and heart level, or that the principal has OM AH HUM on behalf of all of them. Actually the OM is Vairochana, AH is Amitabha and HUM is Akshobya. Then, these radiate lights which invite the wisdom beings.

The wisdom beings come and dissolve with the four-door mantra DZAH HUM BAM HOH. When you say DZAH, the wisdom beings come and merge, but the focus is not yet right, they don’t really become one; they are there as a duplicate of their commitment being.

When you say HUM, the focus is right; you don’t see two noses. They dissolve.

When you say BAM they mix together, not only in focus, but one.

When you say HOH it remains permanent; they are happy to be there, they say: ‘Hoh!’ They are not forced to come, but happily stay. There is a mudra for that.



With that, we have completed generating the field of merit, including the place, the principal, the deities on the body of the principal, and the retinue, as well as the invocation of the wisdom beings and dissolving them through the four-door mantra. You can call it the door mantra or ordering mantra, commanding mantra. It is an order in the sense that the wisdom beings are not only invited, but dissolve and become one. To become one means that they become of one taste. You can no longer say that this is this and that is that. It is mixed like milk in the milk. It is not like water in the milk which would be diluting.

At this point, you have to make a mental resolution, without any doubt, that this Supreme Field of Merit is the collection of all objects of refuge, acknowledging that you not only have generated this whole field of merit, but also have also invited and dissolved the wisdom beings. Anybody and anything that is fit to be an object of refuge is included. You have to make a sort of decision that this really is the collection of all the Lamas, Yidams, Bodhisattvas, Dakas and Dakinis, Dharma Protectors, and Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. This is a very important resolution that we have to pass at this time. Actually that is not good enough, for we have to generate a profound energy of appreciation and respect for all these objects of refuge, especially the principal. The invocation and dissolving of the wisdom beings is not absolutely necessary; however the purpose of doing this is to make the commitment beings very effective by rousing this energy and appreciation within us. That is the reason we do it.

### *Questions and Answers*

Audience: You are saying that we invite the wisdom beings and they become one with the commitment beings. But I thought they were one when we first imagined them already.

Rinpoche: That is right. You do this as a re-inforcement. It is like you know that snow is white. Yet you say sometimes, ‘Look, this snow is so white’. To satisfy our rational mind we do invite them – from their

natural abode, wherever that is. You imagine that they come in, dissolve and become one-ness at that moment. But this is only as a re-inforcement and for the satisfaction of our rational mind.

Audience: It seems that the term ‘wisdom being’ is used in two different ways. In one sense it is meant like here, and in another sense like commitment being, wisdom being and concentration being.

Rinpoche: That is right. But in the end it is nearly the same thing too. Here you are generating a wisdom being, and there you are asking a wisdom being to come. In Tibetan language there is actually two slightly different terms for that. One, the generated wisdom being, is referred to as *ye she sem pa*, and the wisdom beings which you invite, are known as *ye she pa*. In English it is impossible to differentiate.

Audience: Throughout the whole Lama Chöpa practice, do you keep the image of yourself as Lama Yidam?

Rinpoche: Yes and no. Yes in the sense that in the beginning you have said *From Great Bliss I arise as Lama Yidam*. But mostly during the period of generating the Supreme Field and so on it would be rather hard to remember that you are in the form of the Lama Yidam. You almost do all your activities in the ordinary form, without emphasizing who you are and what you are and what you look like. It is unlike the sadhanas. There you have to keep on building up everything one on top of the other. Here it is okay if you remember, it is good, but if you don’t, it does not matter. It is okay.





## IV

### OFFERING THE PRACTICE OF THE SEVEN LIMBS

Leave behind all ordinary devotion  
And take up devotion to the Guru;  
For by pleasing the Guru one attains  
The supreme wisdom of omniscient Buddhahood.<sup>267</sup>

The reason why we have generated the Supreme Field of Merit is so that we can make offerings, *etc.* Offerings are extremely important. As Nagarjuna says here, “Forget about making all different kinds of offerings, give that up and completely focus on *Lama Chöpa*, making offerings to the Vajra Master. By pleasing Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang, by bringing him joy and pleasure, one can attain ultimate enlightenment. Therefore, put your total focus on that.”

Making offerings to Lama Buddha Vajradhara is one of the best ways of purification. It automatically purifies negativities, even heavy ones. Even if you are not focusing on that particular purpose, all negativities are purified automatically, and merits will be automatically accumulated. Also, this helps to achieve ultimate enlightenment. It is said that spiritual developments will grow within you; this practice helps tremendously. The conclusion is that making offerings to the Lama works like ‘Miracle Grow’.<sup>268</sup> That is why it is important and necessary, a must.

What enables a person to attain enlightenment? Actually two things are needed, accumulation of merit and purification. In Tibetan, we call this *sak jang*. *Sak* is to collect. What do you collect? Merit. *Jang* is to purify. What do you purify? Negativities.

Those of us who are seeking Buddhahood quickly, have an especially great need for the collection of merit and purification. In sutra Mahayana, the period of purification and accumulation of merit is three countless eons. We don’t have countless three eons at our disposal, we don’t have that much time. Why? We are in a hurry, because other people are waiting to be helped, a lot of them are in great need of help and, therefore, we want to obtain enlightenment on an ASAP basis,<sup>269</sup> which is the *maha anu yoga tantra* method. *Maha anu yoga tantra* does not depend on a long time or hardship; it can be done very quickly and easily. How? You yourself in the form of a deity use the yoga, or practice, of bliss and void, and make countless, pure, immeasurable offerings to the ultimate Field of Merit, which is the Lama inseparable from the collection of Yidams, Bodhisattvas, *etcetera*. By doing that within a ‘second of a second’ you collect both a tremendous amount of merit as well as purification.

To prove this, here is a quotation from the Heruka tantra, in which the Buddha was asked about the best and the fastest way to accumulate merit. He answered that it should be based on the seven limbs; without taking much time and effort, that is the best we can do. Buddha said:

The first siddhi or accomplishment you can get,  
is making Lama Buddha Vajradhara happy.

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<sup>267</sup> From Nagarjuna’s *Panchakrama, The Five Stages of the Perfection Stage*, to be found in R. Thurman, *Essential Tibetan Buddhism*, pg.257: “Abandoning all forms of worship, Engage truly in the worship of the Mentor. By pleasing him, one will attain The supreme union of omniscience...”

<sup>268</sup> A name of a fertilizer that makes the roses in Rinpoche’s garden grow beautifully.

<sup>269</sup> As soon as possible.

In order to achieve that, make offerings to the Lama,  
whatever offerings you can.

Then, when the Buddha was asked, “What happens if you do that?” he said:

When you do that with pure thoughts,  
all enlightened beings, deities, Yidams, Bodhisattvas,  
will enter into the body of whoever the Lama is,  
and take those offerings personally.  
That way you accumulate a tremendous amount of merit.

Especially for those who are interested in the practice of *Mahamudra*, the first and foremost focal point is this particular practice. There are many quotations to prove this in the commentaries; I am not going to read through them.

Kachen Yeshe Gyaltsen’s commentary explains why there are commitment beings. They are called commitment beings, because they are the basis on which the wisdom beings come and go. They are always there, committed, providing the basis.

Regarding the inseparability of Lama and Buddha, this commentary also quotes from the *Gyuto trawa tantra*:

Vajra master and Buddha should never be seen as two separate beings.

The commentary further says that all the tantras and all the Mahasiddhas in their own practice, not only once but repeatedly, emphasize that. Not only in Vajrayana, but also in the Lamrim, for example in the *Lamrim of Chayulwa*, it says,

If one thinks there is someone separate and better than one’s lama, like Dorje Chang  
or a yidam, such a person will never achieve any accomplishments at all.

We have mentioned Marpa’s story in that regard. So the emphasis on the inseparability of Lama, Buddha and Yidam is very important. In fact, it is the major point of your Lama Chöpa work. It is the base of the whole practice. Chöpa means offering. That lama is the basis of your offering, of your work. If you lose that base, all your efforts will be wasted. So, instead of offering to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, it is more important to do Lama Chöpa. Therefore, in the Seven Limb practice, the object to whom you offer, the base, is the lama.

It is also the best way to purify. A lot of people think, ‘I must do purification. So I am going to do some Vajrasattva recitation.’ Yes, good, but here it says that the most important purification you can do is the Lama Chöpa. Especially, if one wants to obtain Buddhahood ‘quickly, quickly,’ then it totally depends on Lama Chöpa.

In the sutra path, in order to obtain enlightenment, it takes a number of eons to purify and it takes a number of eons to accumulate the merit for it. When the sutras tell you how the Buddhas obtain enlightenment they will say “For countless eons they have purified, for countless eons they have accumulated merit.”

In the Vajrayana, however, it does not take that much time and it also does not have that much difficulty. It can happen within the short period of one lifetime or within the round of some lives to obtain enlightenment. So you have to have all these causes for obtaining full enlightenment within the lifetime or within the round of some lives. That means either in between lives, or in the next life or at least within sixteen life times. That last one would be the Vajrayana’s lowest benefit. However, in order to make that possible, you have to have the causes ready. The way to do that, according to the commentary is

You yourself in the yoga of lama-lha, especially purify all your negativities in front of the ultimate object of refuge, the lama who is inseparable from the mandala and its principal deity. The way to practice this yoga is by making countless, limitless offerings to the lama who is inseparable from the principal of the mandala. In the matter of seconds your accumulation is thereby doubled or even tripled.

This is not just a simple statement by itself but it also proved with the *Heruka tantra* which says,

The first and foremost thing to do is to perform the Lama Chöpa. If you do so, all the Buddhas join in the body of the lama and through that take all of the offerings from the practitioners.

Those of us who are not so fortunate to be born a Rockefeller or something, can in this way practice accumulation of merit and also purification – through the Lama Chöpa. Not only can you obtain enlightenment through that, but it is also absolutely necessary to do so. If you do it right it will accomplish purification and accumulation of merit both together. The commentary further says,

Very often we can see that at the beginning of our life we may not have been that fortunate, but at the end of our life we realize that we have met great vajra-masters and through them been able to do this practice. The Buddhas themselves have given the commitment one after another that they will themselves appear in the form of the guru and accept the offerings.

In the Mahayana sutras the Bodhisattvas ask how to look at the vajra master. Buddha answers,

You should look at your vajra master as a fully enlightened Buddha.  
Even the Buddhas will make prostrations to the vajra master. So why not everyone else?

In short, all ordinary and extraordinary accomplishments have to be obtained through this method.

The Fifth Dalai Lamas' Lamrim *Manjushri's Words* [Tib. *Jampel Zhaling*] says:

This is one of the easiest ways for practitioners to purify negativities.

You see now how important this practice is. I am not telling you that so that you give me your money. I am doing this because this is the fundamental basis on which the Lama Chöpa works. A number of people think that the Gelugpas don't place much importance on the guru yoga. But this is clearly not the case. It is not only available in the Nyingma and Kargyu schools. They may make everybody get up and bow down, *etc.* but the Lama Chöpa is totally based on the guru.

*Lama.* To make it clear once again, when we talk about the lama here, we are not talking about the lamas that come visiting and do the sacred dances and so on. Neither do we refer to the lama with the two lls – the llama. We are talking about our own spiritual master, whoever it may be, man or woman, who has given us a spiritual path, a Buddhist path actually. Not only that; it is also a perfect Buddhist path, not just claiming to be part of Buddhism, like some do, who then collect all sorts of interesting things to go according to that. On the other hand, Sakya Pandita has said,

Even the person who has given you just a single verse of Dharma,  
if you don't consider him/her as lama, you will take rebirth as a dog for a hundred times.

It is not for me to say, but my feeling is that this is a slightly conservative viewpoint. It could be very difficult to follow that. However, if you look into Buddha's previous-life stories, the *Jatakas*, there were several incidents that went like that. I'll tell you one story.

*Story of Buddha requesting teaching.* In one his previous incarnations Buddha wanted a teaching. The teacher said, 'There is no place to teach'. So Buddha's previous incarnation cleared the place, put up some stone to sit on and again requested teachings. Then the teacher said, 'What have you got to offer me?' and he said, 'My body, mind and speech'. The teacher: 'That is not enough. I need your head. You have to cut it off.' He said, 'All right. First you teach me, then you can cut it off.' So the teacher taught. After that Buddha's previous incarnation said, 'All right, you can kill me, but first I have to tell my wife.' The teacher said, 'Okay, you go and do that, and then come back'. So he went, and came back and then said, 'Now I am ready. You can take my head.' In the end the teacher did not chop his head off.

In some stories, people were ready to give their life for one shaloka, one four-line verse. But now, in this age of information, it is different. There is a tremendous amount of information available everywhere, so if we were to treat the teachings in that way, it would be a little too extreme. But a person who teaches you a comprehensive Buddhist path, whether it is a man or a woman, that is the person you refer to as 'Lama'.

*Yidam.* As I said earlier, that refers to a mental commitment and refers to deities such as Guhyasamaja, Heruka, Yamantaka, Hayagriva, Kalachakra, *etc.* These deities are actual manifestations of fully enlightened Buddhas, who have manifested in certain physical aspects with mandala for the commitment of the individual. Tara and Avalokiteshvara, *etc.* are also yidams. Dharma protectors are not yidams. Do not

make a mistake here. They all look the same, but there is a difference. (We will create a chart that will show all these different categories.)<sup>270</sup>

In this tradition, first and foremost is the Lama. Then come the yidams. However, Buddha Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha, is counted as part of the group of lamas, not as part of the group of Buddhas. 'Yidam' as manifested mental commitment does not mean that they are not really there, that they are just imagination. Buddha has manifested in the yidam's form himself and has totally manifested the mandalas. That is why a mandala is not just an artist's expression. There are limitations to the creativity. You cannot just do anything you think of. They are already established, with facts and figures, shapes, diagrams, numbers of deities included. It is a done deal. You cannot re-write history.

*Mandala.* Now you may say, 'If everything is fixed, if the number of people in the mandala is already established, where does that leave me, where am I going to fit in?' Well, apparently, you are not trying to get into that particular mandala, but when you become fully enlightened as one of them, you will have your own complete mandala. You will become the principal of your mandala. You will have all your retinue, your own walls, and everything. You will be completely independent. It will be completely your own set-up. But are you able to design your mandala just as you choose? You may or may not be able to. Let's say you become Vajrayogini. Then your mandala will look like Vajrayogini's mandala. You cannot have a different one.

Right now you are already building it. Any merit you are accumulating is going towards building your future home. The mandala is not made out of bricks, cement, steel and glass. It is made out of your virtuous work, your karma, and so on. Remember, the doors of the mandala are the four mindfulnesses. The consort is the wisdom of your mind. You are yourself. The retinue are always part of your virtuous karma. It is all you, including the cemeteries outside and even the trees, clouds, and everything – the total environment is all your own creation. You are the creator of your own mandala. This may be a little hard to swallow if you are from a Christian background. However, you do create your own mandala. You are creating your own karma even now. We have created our own life. We have created our own sufferings and joys.

When you don't have that understanding you have a problem. You then totally depend on a second or third person. You lose your independence. All you can do then is simple worshipping and buttering and hope that this Somebody will give you happiness. But that is not how it works in basic life at all. It is totally your own doing. We know that very well, even in our daily material life. We accept that if you work hard you earn more money, you may get promoted. Then you may get demoted and lose your job and it is all your own involvement. Of course, second and third persons have something to do with it, but principally it is your own.

Now, the totality of the life that we don't see, operates the same way. Even when we become fully enlightened, the same pattern operates. You have your own mandala and everything is yours. So you don't have to think, 'I may not get a seat up there'. It is not a football game where you have to buy a season ticket weeks ahead.

*Buddha.* As for the Buddha, during the refuge taking we refer to him as the historical Buddha as well as our own future Buddha. In the refuge period it is clearly explained, however, if you have doubts, then Buddha is just the Buddha you see in the pictures. But what is Buddha really? It is the awakened state, the mind that knows everything. Actually, it is the mind which is totally free of all obstacles, blocks, etc. It does not matter what a Buddha looks like. Actually, honestly speaking, I have a very hard time to accept, that if we were alive at the time of the Buddha, he really looked like that. He would have been a very strange-looking fellow. He might have had a little extra egg-shaped head or something. Then it was probably exaggerated later and over the last 2500 years. Buddha is supposed to have produced drawings of himself, but who knows exactly? However, he mentioned clearly in his teachings:

If you want to draw a figure to represent the Buddha, look at the most handsome person in your town. Draw that person and add up the qualities of the 32 major and 80 minor marks.

So naturally, the artists add up a little bit here and there, make the ears a little longer, join the skin between the fingers, *etc.* Then in China, representations of Buddha look like Chinese, in Tibet they look like Tibetans, in India they look like Indians and in Thailand they look like Thais. The Thai Buddha even

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<sup>270</sup> Chart not yet available.

has his aura and head gear very pointed. That is because the traditional Thai costumes of the dancers, *etc.* look like that. That is the culture added up. So maybe we will have to have an American Buddha with a big nose, *etc.* Audience: Didn't Tsongkhapa have a big nose? Rinpoche: That is right, he did. His nickname was 'Big Nose'.

*Lama – Yidam – Buddha – Mandala.* Anyway, this was just to clarify what the historical representation is, but in reality, between guru, yidam and Buddha there is no big separation. In fact, it is all one. Just historically, and in diagrams we have to make that separation. The order is that first comes the guru, including Shakyamuni Buddha, then the Yidams, then the Buddhas, then the Bodhisattvas, then the Arhats, then the Dakas and Dakinis, then the Dharma protectors.

However, there is a lot of overlap between all of these, Lama and Yidams, Lama and Buddha, Yidams and Bodhisattvas. But don't worry about that. In reality they are all one. It is like in a drama. One person wears a particular dress, goes on stage and plays a certain person. After that he goes back, puts on a different mask, dresses differently and comes out as another person. That is how in reality it functions. Historically, you have to differentiate. Buddha lived 2500 years ago, Tsongkhapa in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and when you talk about the present masters, you are in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century. Historically, there are different personalities and identities, but in absolute reality they are all one-ness.

As I said, the whole mandala, including house, ground, animals, clouds, and everything, is part of the Lama himself. So obviously the body of the Lama is him- or herself. Within that, you have commitment being, wisdom being and concentration being. The commitment being is the bigger picture, the outer framework. The wisdom being is the inner being within that and the concentration being or absorption being is the total absorption of the essence. There is one within the other. In one way it might be a disservice to give you the Russian doll as an example. Although it gives you the picture of one thing being inside another, in the case of the Russian dolls they are all separate dolls. In this case here, it is the same thing, without separation.

There is a 'body mandala' here too, with parts of the body of the lama being this or that Buddha and so on. It is not really called body mandala, but it sort of is. A mandala usually is the total environment as well as the inhabitants, including space, house, ground, air, and so on. The mandala is its own little universe. It has its own heaven and hell all together. Because of that you don't have to worry about where it is located physically. Only in the description of Shambhala, Tushita and perhaps the Western Paradise there is a mention of where it is located. The rest of them are within ourselves. The moment you are referring to a mandala, that is what you are talking about, and not so much the body, although of course, there also is a body mandala.

### *Questions and Answers*

#### *Supreme Field of Merit; devotion*

Audience: When I hear about the Supreme Field, with its many figures, I get the sense that it is something unfolding which, however, is already contained in the central figure. Is that the correct idea?

Rinpoche: Sure. Then in the dissolving system the same thing goes backwards. They all dissolve to each other, back into the central figure.

Audience: Speaking of generating the Supreme Field, you did not go into detail about who the various groups of Lamas behind the main figure are. You said at one point that there are the five groups of Lamas, but you did not say who they are.<sup>271</sup>

Rinpoche: You may find it confusing to have so many beings and groups of people to visualize. But you don't have to do everything straight away. There is a lot of room in Buddhism to do short and long practices and very, very abbreviated ones. Don't feel that you are missing something. It is okay. And if you don't know you ask somebody. There are now a lot of other students you can help you. You don't have to hesitate to ask questions. If you are Buddha, of course, then you know everything. But you are not. If you are Buddha, then what are you doing here? Get out of here!

Audience: When it says in the beginning that you arise as the Lama Yidam, can you visualize yourself as Shakyamuni at that point?

<sup>271</sup> See note 40 on page 16 and notes 246 and 248 on page 113. For the five groups of lamas in the Refuge tree, see page 49.

Rinpoche: Yes, you can. As a matter of fact, in the usual, daily life, Buddha Shakyamuni is much more suitable than any of those terrifying deities. It is generally much more convenient, especially if people are not familiar with Yamantaka and deities like that. You can use Shakyamuni as a bus stop Vajrayana deity! Don't make me spell it out more, because if I allow people who don't have initiations directly to visualize themselves as Buddha Shakyamuni, it could be a downfall of the 7<sup>th</sup> Vajrayana vow, it could be losing secrecy.

Further it is not necessary to tell everybody everything all the time. In the West, some authors have to put everything out there. There is a Tibetan saying,

If the sparrows have eaten seven grains, they have to go and brag about it to all the others.

Likewise, in the West, if somebody knows a little bit, they have to put it out there straight away. Why? I don't know if that is just American culture. I don't think so. I cannot imagine that people only know what they write about. That may be only the case with the people who have a mediocre level of education. The people with great knowledge, the great scientists, can't go and tell everybody everything they know. No way. It is the same thing with spiritual knowledge. If you have only mediocre knowledge, then you have to say everything. It is like saying, 'This is my lung, this is my intestines, this is my liver'. You don't have to do that. You have to keep depth in what you are saying. People will get into it. They will come in. Don't say everything you know. But that is only my personal view.

Audience: What are the thoughts, feelings and actions that occur with true guru devotion outside the Lama Chöpa ritual?

Rinpoche: For me personally, there is not so much difference between outside and inside here. It is almost the same whether it is in or out. That does not mean you don't get disappointed or upset. It does not mean that you don't think it is silly. That is all there. But honestly speaking, there is not much difference between inside and outside of the Lama Chöpa.

Audience: I wanted to know what are acts and thoughts of true devotion on the lines of trust in your own experience?

Rinpoche: Perhaps, during the Lama-Chöpa period, particularly during the group chanting, you may have a little more profound feeling. That is because of the environment and condition. Otherwise, my attitude and my respect towards all my gurus are basically the same. I don't see much difference. My thoughts and feelings for them are always characterized by profound respect, trust and even acknowledging the inseparability from the enlightened beings. Certain behavior or expression and advice may not agree with me, but I never think that they don't know. Sometimes I think they are wrong, but I never think they don't know. Sometimes I think they are wrong and I don't want to know why they say what they say. I just don't want to know. It becomes particularly difficult if some gurus who enjoy an almost equal amount of respect from my side, disagree with each other, if they have different viewpoints. That becomes very difficult. I don't want to know what the reason for that is. There comes a point where you have to walk on a very thin thread and you don't want to fall either to the right or to the left. These things happen. But in any case, my perception of the teachers that I have really taken teachings from is something very strong and solid and reliable.

Audience: Which kinds of practices bring about such a respect?

Rinpoche: Basically, whenever I see, remember or think of the teachers I have taken teachings from, I don't see them as separate from the Buddha. That's it. Period. Their words may differ here and there. They may come up with some silly statements and reactions. You can just simply ignore these. The problems I was hinting at before, are deeper than that. That can become a big problem. Then you are really walking on a thin thread, because you cannot have an impure relationship or disrespect to any of your teachers. If you do, you have a problem with your guru-devotional practice. If you have a problem with one of your important gurus you have a problem with all your important gurus. It is the same thing. So that is becoming a very important issue. But I don't have a problem with the issue of devotion itself. That is very strong. And you really don't see much separation between them and the enlightened beings. You may joke with them, you may gossip, you may say some funny things, but the basic perception is that of no separation between them and enlightened beings. You have a problem when fundamental differences come in.

Audience: You introduced different visualizations in relation to the Lama Chöpa. What do you do with these when you are done?

Rinpoche: Go to sleep or get busy. I don't get it, what do you want to do with them?

Audience: I mean that often one type of visualization gets introduced and then another one. So what do you do with the previous one then?

Rinpoche: I see. In case of the Refuge Field in the beginning, that gets dissolved. We talked about that; it is like when you breathe onto a mirror and the moisture dissolves into the center of the mirror. If you are doing your sadhanas back to back, they all have their own dissolving system and you come out again as simple yidam with one face and two hands. You may not carry that visualization with you all the time, because probably you will forget about it anyway.

*Story of the young monk.* It reminds me of the story that Lochö Rinpoche told. In some monastery a monk kept on meditating on Yamantaka with 34 arms and 16 legs. He was sent for duty to serve tea. He went into the kitchen and asked the cook, 'Which hand of mine should hold the tea pot?' He was visualizing all these hands holding hand implements. So he didn't know what to do. The kitchen staff took a stick and beat him on his right hand and said, 'This terrible hand of yours should hold it!' So somehow you have got to let it go, otherwise you will be walking down the street shouting, 'I am Yamantaka.'

Audience: What is the difference between a yidam and a deity? I heard you say once that a yidam is a commitment being and a deity is a spirit. How should we think about this?

Rinpoche: This is not a valid distinction. People use the word 'deity' for different purposes. In Malaysia for example at every corner there is a little temple with somebody coming into a trance and in all these situations the Malaysians talk about deities. These are not yidams. In the West spirits coming into a trance is not such a common thing. Western translators may not be so familiar with the use of the term 'deity' for these situations. But in Asia it is very common, including Tibet. There is always some kind of spirit here and there. When you cross certain mountain passes, you have to get off your horse, take your hat off and bow down, otherwise one of these spirits will get upset and make your horse fall down. There are a lot of these spirit-deity type of beings. These are not objects of refuge.

*Story of a spirit and a goiter.* There is one example. Near Tomo Geshe Rinpoche's place in Tibet there used to be one of these spirits for whom you have to take your hat off and bow down, etc. One guy happened to spend the night there. It happened to be the night where the local spirit was host to a meeting of spirits. He had to feed everybody. Normally, these kinds of spirits would kill people and use their bodies. That guy, however, who slept there, had a goiter. He had prayed to that spirit and fallen asleep. Now that spirit came looking around, saw that extra thing, that goiter, and took that. Then he went into the spirit's meeting and offered it to the other spirits. But no one wanted to eat it, it was terrible stuff. The guy who slept there woke up without his goiter and was very happy. He went around everywhere and told people that if you sleep at that place you would lose your goiter. So somebody else went there, prayed that his goiter would go away and slept there. However, the spirit got hold of that old left-over one and put it next to the one the guy already had. So next morning when he woke up he had two of them!

These things are the reasons why such spirits are not objects of refuge. If they are not objects of refuge they cannot be yidams, although they may be referred to as deities by some people.

*On emptiness, ego, permanence and impermanence*

Audience: What is the something that emptiness is empty of that it can negate nihilism?

Rinpoche: Ego. You know, it is a funny name. Of course, this terminology has been introduced by the psychologists to show something big, strong. We try to show it as something which is the opposite. So it is not necessarily a great term at all, however, for lack of better words we are using it.

Audience: I have a further question on emptiness. The word 'emptiness' itself does not really convey what it is supposed to mean. It gives me the message of zero and nothing. Yet when you talk about it that is not what I am hearing. I am thinking of it as something ever-present. Like time. You can't pinpoint it down, because it is always changing. But in one sense there is always time. It is eternally ever-present. You also talked at another time about the frequency on which enlightened beings function. You said it is either completely still or moving so quickly that we can't measure it. If that is the notion of emptiness, if

emptiness is not nothingness but the fact that you cannot pinpoint things because they are a continuum, then that is not empty, but all-containing.

Rinpoche: I do agree with the confusing notion of the word ‘emptiness’. I do prefer to use the term *shunyata* rather than emptiness. The translators try to justify that by emphasizing that the word is not *empty*, but *empti-ness*. I am not sure whether that works or not. At the same time I have to say that this emptiness is actually permanent, not impermanent. It is very interesting when you compare it with time. You almost come to the point where you have to say that time is permanent. This time and that time in particular is impermanent. I am not sure whether you can say that time is permanent, but emptiness definitely is.

Audience: When you are saying that it is permanent, that is not because it is static and not moving, but because it is so dynamic that you can’t hold it. Is that so?

Rinpoche: Dynamic or not, it could be very dynamic. But it is not the case that it is moving so fast that we can’t figure out what it is. I think emptiness doesn’t change at all. That is why it is permanent. From any angle, it is permanent.

Audience: What happens to impermanence in the realm of emptiness?

Rinpoche: You would have to say that the emptiness with regard to impermanence is permanent.

Audience: About the concept of universal consciousness. Is that the same thing as being all-pervading? Is the problem that we are thinking that our consciousness is separate from the universal consciousness?

Rinpoche: I don’t even know what you mean by universal consciousness. Is there one consciousness known as universal consciousness? I doubt it very much. Is there one universal consciousness which goes smoothly and accommodates everything? I doubt it very much. Honestly, I don’t know what this universal consciousness is.

Audience: I thought the reason why I don’t understand emptiness is that I believe that my consciousness is separate from everything.

Rinpoche: No, that is not true. Your consciousness is different from everything else. That is not the reason why we don’t understand emptiness. We don’t understand emptiness because we haven’t cleared our obstacles and blocks. I do have my own emptiness and my own primordial mind. I just don’t understand that because of the blocks.

Audience: If *shunyata* is permanent, is it necessarily also static?

Rinpoche: Yes, probably.

Audience: Then how does it interact with impermanence?

Rinpoche: Every impermanent thing carries its own side of permanence. I said before that the emptiness on impermanence is permanent.

Audience: When you use the word ‘ego’ to refer to a deluded, suffering mind, does that refer to a mind of both, self-grasping and self-cherishing? Or is there something else? Or is self grasping-alone suffering? Is there a specific Tibetan word that corresponds to the label ‘ego’?

Rinpoche: The closest Tibetan word would be *nga*. That is the self. It is not *dag dzin* or *rang che dzin*, but just simply *nga*, the ‘I’. Self-grasping would be *ngar dzin*, and self-cherishing is *rang che dzin*. I think ‘ego’ refers to something which we perceive by ourselves as a big Me or I or Self. It works as the basis on which we can build the self-cherishing and the self-grasping. The self-grasping is one layer deeper than the self-cherishing. And then there is something deeper, beyond that, which we hold on to as Me or I. It is not in between skin and flesh, or flesh and bone, but somehow even deeper inside. That is what I try to refer to as ‘ego’. Actually what we are really looking at is the object of negation. The use of the word ‘ego’ is just to get some kind of understanding and idea. That is even much deeper than self-cherishing and self-grasping. These are already in the category of thoughts and mental functions. You can point them out with the finger. But what we are looking for goes much deeper than that.

Audience: Emptiness depends on the existence of phenomena which arise dependently. Emptiness does not stand alone, does not have inherent existence. How then can it be seen as permanent?



Rinpoche: Emptiness itself is permanent. What it really means is the non-existence of the object of negation. By talking about the dependent existence of everything we try to lead you to the point of the object of negation. Whatever we are perceiving as independent existence is not there, because it is dependent arising. When you find the object of negation, the negation itself is permanent. The object of negation is not permanent. This is very clear.

Audience: It says in *Odyssey to Freedom, step 21: Thus all created phenomena are impermanent.*

Therefore, one can surmise that all uncreated phenomena are permanent.

Rinpoche: Yes, true. And negation is a non-created phenomenon. Therefore it is permanent.

Audience: How can you negate something that isn't there?

Rinpoche: The object which you are negating, the self or ego, is not there. But the negation itself is there. And that is permanent. The understanding of that is actually the realization of emptiness. When you get to the subject of permanence, something comes out of that which never changes. It is really true that created things are impermanent and thus non-created things are permanent.

Think about any name, for example 'human being'. That is permanent. Or think, 'Buddha'. That is permanent. Buddha Shakyamuni or any other particular Buddha is impermanent. 'Buddha' does not change, therefore it is permanent.

Audience: What about consciousness?

Rinpoche: That is totally impermanent.

Audience: You once gave the example of a person perceiving in the distance something that looks like a human being, but on getting closer, realizing that is just a rock.

Rinpoche: I use this example very often for proof of contradiction of a wrong view by a reliable mind. But I am not trying to get at that here. I am simply saying that 'Buddha' is permanent and that a particular Buddha is impermanent. There is a big difference. 'Buddha' is always there, it does not change. It is not created, whereas the person 'Buddha' is created. Buddha as a concept is permanent. Human being as a concept is permanent.

Audience: That is like in Plato. The idea of chair exists. The chair itself is an impermanent thing.

Rinpoche: That is probably right.

Audience: But before the idea of chair was there, the chair did not exist, is that right?

Rinpoche: Not quite. The form of the chair might be there, whether you label it as c-h-a-i-r or not.

Audience: How does negation qualify as a phenomenon?

Rinpoche: The concept of negation is existent. I am looking at phenomena as something that exists.

Audience: It may be just a different use of the word 'impermanent' that can cause confusion. In English 'impermanent' is often understood to mean that something comes to an end and isn't there anymore. But actually it just means changing.

Rinpoche: That's right. I am looking at something being permanent in the sense that it is unchangeable.

Audience: Then a stream of consciousness, a continuity of discontinuity, does not come to an end and disappear, but it changes. Therefore it is impermanent. Is that right?

Rinpoche: Yes, the consciousness is impermanent, but the concept of consciousness again, is permanent.

Audience: That is an interesting distinction. The mind is impermanent, the negation is permanent, and what about an idea or thought in the mind? In the platonic sense that should be permanent.

Rinpoche: Whatever the mind negates, is the object of negation. That negation does not change at all. You changed your mind, but the negation does not change. It always remains there. The mind acknowledging may change, but that doesn't matter.

Lets stop this discussion here. We are not going to get to the end here, but this should at least give you an idea. Let us continue to talk about the subject of the Seven Limbs, in particular the offering of a bath to the deities.

*Bathing the Deities*<sup>272</sup>

If you want to go in detail, at this point you can insert the practice of providing the Field of Merit with a bath, like these days nature-healers give you a nice herbal bath, that sort of thing. This is not found in your *Lama Chöpa* text, but in the detailed *Lama Chöpa* it is.

What do you do? You generate a bathroom with a beautiful smell and a floor of crystal, decorated with golden ornaments. In other words, you provide a nice bathroom. The mudra done here is holding a scarf twisted round so that looks like a tent-bathroom while visualizing a beautiful bathroom. The descriptions of the traditional teachings do not necessarily have to be followed; a modern bathroom may, in terms of convenience if not quality, even be better than the traditional one.

Then what do you do? You do not take the images of the enlightened beings down and wash them; you take their reflection with a mirror and in your visualization you think that the entire merit field is brought in. Next, you offer the bath; you bathe them. Then, you visualize the letters at the five points of their body<sup>273</sup> and you give them towels and dry them. At the end, you give them a new set of clothes, ornaments, hand implements, towels, lotions, everything. After you have offered everything, you visualize that you pick up the mirror and go round and you let them go back into the commitment beings on the tree of merit.

Offering the seven limbs has the following outlines:

1. Prostrations.
2. Offerings.
3. Purification.
4. Rejoicing.
5. Requesting the Teachings.
6. Requesting to Remain.
7. Dedication.

**1. Praises or Prostrations**<sup>274</sup>

The word prostration itself never sounds right in English. It is actually praising and also developing the desire to maintain what you want. Let me give you the example of how the Chinese do prostrations. They will touch their forehead to the ground, and open the palms of their hands upward, with their arms flat on the floor and they will wait for a while – for somebody to put a million dollars in their palms! They do that all the time. That is one of the Chinese styles of prostration. According to Naropa, whose style of prostration we follow, that would probably not be right. However, I don't object to the Chinese tradition. They do it that way and it is perfectly fine. But according to Naropa you are not supposed to put your forehead on the ground for a long time and you should not stay on the ground so long. The Lamrim will tell you that you can become four-legged in your next life time through that. In other words you can become a horse, cow, sheep or yak. The Chinese way of doing just gives you very nicely the full message of what prostration is for. But if you stick to the Tibetan prostration in Naropa's style, you either do the five-point prostration – that is two legs, two hands and forehead touching the floor – or the full-body-length prostration. And you have to get up immediately.

The main idea is that through your prostration you express your liking for the qualities of the objects of refuge. You admire them, and you want them. You have the desire to have them for yourself too. The two words *chah* and *tsel* express these two aspects. So the word *prostration* does not do justice to the whole meaning of the term *chah tsa*. Therefore, in our *Lama Chöpa* translation we use instead the expression *I praise you, may I become like you* for each of the verses for prostration.

<sup>272</sup> For the verses of the bathing, see page 356. Also see: Shantideva, *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, ch 2, vs 10-14. For the description of the bathing practices, see: Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in Our Hands*, vol. I, p. 185-187; Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, p. 198-201.

<sup>273</sup> See literature previous note.

<sup>274</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 116-124. Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 95-98.

The praise here is very similar to the praise in other practices. The words of the tantras are arranged in different ways in different practice texts. In the *Six-Session Guru-Yoga* a verse says:

I bow at your lotus-feet, O my jewel-like guru Vajradhara.  
Your kindness heralds an instantaneous dawn of great bliss.

And in the Yamantaka sadhana:

O jewel-like Lama who possesses the vajra,  
out of whose kindness the state of great bliss is attained in but a single moment,  
to the lotus (beneath your) feet I bow.

Prostration has:

1. Prostration to the Root Master.
2. Prostration to the Other Masters.
3. Prostration to the Lineage Masters.

#### **a. Making Prostrations to the Root Master**

1. Looking at the Root Master as Sambhogakaya.
2. Looking at the Root Master as Nirmanakaya.
3. Looking at the Root Master as Dharmakaya.

An alternative way to look at the next few verses is in terms of praising the Lama's body, speech and mind. So we have three kinds of *chah*. To whom are you making the prostrations? Not only to the Supreme Field which we have generated, but also to countless numbers of enlightened beings everywhere. There are more enlightened beings than dust particles or grains of sand. Each little atom that we can perceive has an enlightened being on it. Or you could say that each snowflake has an enlightened being on it. Do we walk over their head? That is an interesting question. Actually, each and every enlightened being has total knowledge. They know that there are dust particles or snow flakes. Since they know that, their mind is there. And because their mind is there, their body is there. This is because they function in union, the union of body and mind. Normally I say their body and mind function on the same frequency, but more in detail it is the union. Wherever their mind is their body also is. Wherever their understanding is directed, their mind is there. Once, when I explained that in a talk in terms of 'God is everywhere', I got a big, fat, floppy kiss on my mouth from a Southern Methodist priest in St. Johns. I asked him whether that was meant as a compliment and he said, 'You not only talk like a Southern Methodist priest, but you made a very important point about how God is everywhere.' So the enlightened beings are everywhere. Actually, we are sitting on enlightened beings, stepping on enlightened beings, enlightened beings are sitting on our forehead, they are everywhere.

*Mental prostration.* You focusing on the Supreme Field of Merit that you have generated and on all those countless enlightened beings. You appreciate their qualities. You have to think that you are seeing them there, perceiving their qualities and you think that they are fantastic. You generate strong intelligent faith and you decide that you would like to obtain their qualities. With such a strong mental commitment actually seeing them before you, that is the mental prostration.

*Physical prostration.* You manifest countless versions of your own body, wherever there are enlightened beings. In other words, you mentally imagine that you create an individual 'you' in front of each enlightened being and make the physical gesture of the highest point of your body touching the lowest part of the body of the objects of refuge. The gesture itself could vary. It does not matter whether you do the full-length prostration or the five-point one or you just fold your hands or you salute or whatever you want to do. A gesture is important. Many Tibetans lamas, even His Holiness, will raise one hand in front of their chest when greeting people.

*Verbal prostration.* In Samantabhadra's style each of these of your bodies now generates hundreds of heads. Each of the heads has hundreds of tongues. With these tongues you verbally praise the objects of refuge. That is the speech prostration.

With that mind, observing the body, mind and speech prostration, you now say ‘I praise you.’

*Looking at the Root Master as Sambhogakaya*

*Gang gi thuh je dhe wa chen pö yeeng  
ku sum go phang chok kyang kay chik la  
tsöl dze la ma rin chen ta bü ku  
dor je chen zhap pay mor chah tsel lo.*

- st. 15. **I praise you who with great compassion bestows  
In an instant the three bodies of great bliss.  
Oh Lama like a wish-fulfilling jewel,  
You hold the vajra. May I become like you!**

*Gang* normally refers to ‘who’ in English, which is, in this case, the Lama. *Thuh je* means kindness, so ‘by whose kindness’ or ‘by your kindness’. Because of the Lama’s kindness, we can experience the *dhe wa chen pö yeeng* which means the sphere of great bliss. *Yeeng* means actually *dhatu*, *dharmadhatu*, and is the ‘kick’ that one gets out of great joy. What is the ‘kick’ of great bliss? It is achieving the three bodies, three kayas, *ku sum*, and these are the Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya. You pray that you may be able to obtain these within the short span of one lifetime.

*Three kayas.* When you first become a Buddha, your mind is absorbed in a huge, joyful, unidentifiable, invisible state. Your mind is completely absorbed in that and there is no tangibility of any physical form; that level is called *Dharmakaya*. So, first you become enlightened on the mind level. Although you attain enlightenment of body and mind simultaneously, if there is some sequence, then the mind is first.

From that mind state, the first very special qualified form in which you can rise, is the *Sambhogakaya*. I describe it as a special qualified form because it has five qualities. 1) It is accessible only to selected people. 2) It is very exclusive to a certain teaching. 3) It is very exclusive in terms of retinue. 4) It is very exclusive in terms of time. 5) It is very exclusive in terms of its life.<sup>275</sup> So, it is an exclusive club, and thus bound to be nice and enjoyable; therefore it is called ‘enjoyment body’, which is the translation for Sambhogakaya.

Being so exclusive cannot do much good for the big majority of beings that are outside. In order to be able to help them, another form is manifested from the Sambhogakaya. This is the *Nirmanakaya*, the manifestation body. That is not restricted, but open.

The ultimate three stages, three kayas, can be attained even in the short period of one life-time, actually in what is called *kay chik la*, ‘like in one second,’ a very short period. Here that does not mean a second, but one whole life. To make this possible is such a kindness. When this ultimate goal can be obtained, then you will definitely be able to achieve all the other minor or mundane achievements. So you remember the kindness of the Lama. That is why he is called *lama rin chen*, jewel-like lama, or rinpoche. He is the wishfulfilling jewel, because he can fulfill all wishes. If you can fulfill the wish of the three kayas, then you can fulfill all mundane wishes as well.

The Lama is able to deliver ultimate enlightenment to me. It is true, if everything works. We often say, “This is an important point, this is a nice omen,” and so on. You know why? If everything works. One of the earlier Lama’s of the Kagyu or Nyingma tradition said:

If the Lama delivers it, wherever you want to go, you can reach;  
instead of paying a fee for the vehicle, develop great faith.

In the *Guhyasamaja Tantra* it says:

By the kindness of the Lama, things are achieved; even when you think you won’t get anywhere,  
or think you’re not going to achieve anything, even then you will get it.

Because of the kindness, compassion, capability and power of the Lama, it works that way. To give an example: if you are climbing a mountain-cliff, even though you are not intending to fall or thinking about

<sup>275</sup> Also see page 70

falling, if you are scared and shaky, you will fall down. But, by the kindness of the Lama, even if you keep on thinking that nothing positive is going to happen to you, the positive will be delivered, you will make it! Those are Buddha Vajradhara's words. That is why *Lama Chöpa* becomes so extremely important.

A number of people think the Gelugpas do not put much emphasis on Guru devotion. In the West, people think the Gelugpas ignore the Lamas and don't want to do guru-yoga. That is not true. It is important, but we don't demand or command anything. The best respect grows through the affection that disciples develop. If you keep on demanding, it does not work.

*Internal and external vajra.* I am trying to find the best translation of *dorje chen*<sup>276</sup>, because I want to give you the meaning of the word. In Tibetan, it means 'the person with the vajra', so it is vajra holder.

There is an *internal* vajra and an external one; that is the main point of this verse. The internal refers to bliss-void inseparable wisdom. It is diamond-like, indestructible, in the nature of a vajra, because it is inseparable bliss-void. It is wisdom itself. This is the inner meaning of vajra holder or 'the one with the vajra'.

What is meant here is that inseparable bliss-void takes on a physical form with face and hands. *Dorje chen* is the one who, in absolute reality, is bliss-void inseparable, taking a physical appearance. In order to show that we have the *external* gesture of holding a vajra in the hand; so Buddha Vajradhara holds a vajra in his right hand. It is the signal or sign that in absolute reality this being is not an ordinary being, but indestructible bliss-void combined, taking the physical shape of Buddha Vajradhara.

So the internal vajra is the actual source Vajradhara comes from, the external is the physical appearance of Buddha Vajradhara, in *Sambhogakaya* form. Not *Nirmanakaya*, because he is dressed in the deity costume, holding bell and vajra, which is the *Sambhogakaya* appearance.

You look at the root guru as the vajra holder, because he has destroyed the ordinary perception an ordinary conception. The vajra in his hand is the signal for that.

At the Sutra level our object of negation or object of destruction is our neuroses, our negative emotions and negative karma. In Vajrayana it is the ordinary perception and conception. The vajra is the signal of the victory over ordinary perception and conception. The bell signifies the wisdom that destroys ordinary perception and conception. That is why Buddha Vajradhara carries bell and vajra. He embodies overcoming not only delusions and the imprints of delusions, but also overcoming ordinary perception and conception. This is total enlightenment. You bow to his lotus feet with the words *zhap pay mor chah tsel lo*: to your lotus feet, the lowest part of your body, I bow with the highest part of my body. You touch the lowest part of his body with the highest part of your body.

You know, of course, that the Tibetan word *chah tsel* has a double meaning: 1) Paying respect, bowing down. 2) Aspiring to attain the same qualities as the object of respect.<sup>277</sup> In our translation we avoid the word 'prostration'. Instead we say 'I praise you. May I become like you'. This gives you the bigger picture, the deeper meaning of prostration. The English word does not convey that meaning.

You are bowing to Vajradhara whose great compassion is able to bestow *the three bodies of great bliss*. These refer to Buddha's body, speech and mind. You can also look at them in terms of *Dharmakaya*, *Sambhogakaya* and *Nirmanakaya*. You can do it either way.

In short, when you read the word 'vajra holder', you have to remember the internal and external meaning. Whether the translation is precise or not, you don't need to read a commentary, but you need to be shown once and understand the meaning. Then whenever you see the word, you get the symbolic message.

*Vajra, bell and mudra in prostration verses.* When you chant the verses for prostration there are mudras that go with that. For example, when you recite the first line *gang gi thuh je dhe wa chen pö yeeng*, you hold up the vajra with the right hand in front of you, at the second line you ring the bell, for the third line you perform the lotus gesture, and at the fourth line you fold the hands. When you are singing slowly

<sup>276</sup> On a question about it, Rinpoche replied: "*Dorje chen* can mean *Dorje chang*, but not necessarily. *Dorje chang*, literally 'vajra-holder', is the name of Buddha Vajradhara. *Dorje chen*, literally 'the one with the vajra', refers here to Buddha Vajradhara."

<sup>277</sup> Also see page 139.

you have time and you can do the lotus mudra three times. When you recite faster you can reduce the mudras. The mudras don't look good if you do them too fast. The most important objection to mudras is that they should not look like monkey's movements. That covers the master as *Sambhogakaya*.

*Looking at the Root Master as Nirmanakaya*

1. Nirmanakaya who really appeared as Nirmanakaya, for example Buddha.
2. Buddha having taken rebirth as an ordinary human being, in this case Lama Tsongkhapa.
3. Buddha appearing in any form.

So you look at the real Nirmanakaya and at the one which functions like the Nirmanakaya.

*Rap jam gyel wa kün gi ye she ni  
gang dhül chir yang char way thap key choh  
ngur mik dzin pei gar gyi nam röl pa  
kyap gön dham pay zhap la chah tsel lo*

- st. 16. **I praise you, exalted wisdom of the Buddhas  
That manifest skillful means to tame us all,  
Enacting the role of a saffron-robed monk.  
Oh Refuge Protector, may I become like you!**

'Exalted wisdom' is a good translation. It means omniscience as well as omnipresence. Actually the wisdom of the Enlightened beings is everywhere. This wisdom is there trying to help people and lead them to enlightenment. It has taken the physical appearance of a saffron-robed monk.

*Rap jam gyel wa* means 'wherever there are Buddhas'. Actually, *gyel wa* means victor, one who has great victory over the delusions and the imprints of the delusions, which refers to Buddha.

Tibetans call the Dalai Lama 'Gyelwa Rinpoche', rather than 'Dalai Lama'. The title of the Dalai Lama was given by the Mongolian Khan to the Third Dalai Lama, Sonam Gyatso<sup>278</sup>. It was not carried by the First and Second Dalai Lama.

*Yeshe* means wisdom. So, it is the wisdom of all the Buddhas in infinite space, wherever they are in the ten directions. This wisdom appears, taking a physical form, wherever, whatever and whenever, for those who need it. The manifestations and reincarnations of the enlightened beings don't have to be incarnate lamas who are recognized. They can incarnate in male or female form, in the form of a stupid person, even in the form of a bridge or scientific equipment. It is traditionally described like that. That is why the *Nirmanakaya* is important. It is not really restricted to a physical appearance of someone that looks like a Buddha or a monk or a male or even a human being. It is not restricted. It can even be sometimes in the form of an absolutely stupid being.

*The Story of Gongkar Lama.* Perhaps you remember Gongkar Lama, who came with the Loseling monks some time ago. Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche writings mentioned his [previous] incarnation, the one of two lifetimes ago.

At that time, Gongkar Lama was very powerful and lived like a Chinese warlord. When he would go out, his retinue of 30 or 40 people all carried rifles, shotguns, and knives. He himself carried lots of weapons.

He was supposed to recover a great treasure and he knew that a big bird was to show him where the treasure was. He was out riding one day with a number of people, all carrying guns and riding horses and shooting their rifles in the air, at nothing in particular. Suddenly, they saw that big bird and started shooting at it. As the bird circled around in the air, Gongkar Lama himself raised his rifle and shot it. Now the bird did not fall where they expected it to, but, though wounded, kept on flying for a while and landed in the territory of Gongkar Lama's enemies. So that was where he was supposed to find the treasure. This enemy camp had a powerful force of 100 people as opposed to Gongkar Lama's 25 or 35. So he had big problems in getting to that treasure.

Anyway, to make a long story short, he obtained a high title by guaranteeing a certain official that he would not have to take rebirth in the hell realms. Through that title and other means Gongkar Lama

<sup>278</sup> Dalai is the literal Mongolian translation of Gyatso and means 'ocean'. Literature on the Dalai Lama's: Glenn H. Mullin, *The Fourteen Dalai Lamas*.

was able to enter the enemy territory and find the huge rock where this dying bird had fallen. He then split the rock in two with his bare hands. Inside he found four boxes, which he brought out. Somehow he twisted them and they opened, but nobody could open them except him. Inside, there were very special pills. Looking inside, you would only see six pills, but no matter how many of them Gongkar Lama would take out, they were not used up, five or six always remained. These pills had the capacity to protect from bullets.

This Gongkar Lama protected Trijang Rinpoche when he went to his hometown. At that time there were two Trijang Rinpoches. One had been recognized in Trijang Rinpoche's monastery by his main people and one was recognized in Central Tibet. The one recognized in Central Tibet was the famous Trijang Rinpoche. When he went to his native area, a number of people tried to kill him through various means. So this Gongkar Lama protected him throughout the journey, telling him exactly what would happen and how he should act. Through magic, the enemies produced lightning designed to hit him anywhere he went. Gongkar Lama warned him that there would be nine instances where lightning strikes could hit him and told him at that time to watch towards the left side of the mountains. He was going to move the thunderstorm away. Gongkar Lama made sure that the lightning didn't hit anything. So this lama used to live like a Chinese warlord seemingly interested only in horses and guns. All his followers were like that as well. He was a mahasiddha sort of a person.

When I was in the monastery, his reincarnation was a little older than I, and he was absolutely stupid. You could not find a person stupider than he was. He used to sit next to me and during our meetings and feasts I had to make sure that he did not eat the wrong thing. He never said anything sensible. He would just move his hands about in a strange way. This reincarnation lived in such a stupid manner. Now that person's reincarnation, who came to visit America two years ago, is quite an intelligent person. That is how the incarnation system works. That is why it is said that the Nirmanakaya can appear even in a stupid way or as inanimate object.

So there is three types of Nirmanakaya, 1) the Nirmanakaya like that of Buddha Shakyamuni,<sup>279</sup> 2) the one that appears in normal human form like Tsongkhapa, 3) the one that appears in all sorts of other different forms. Therefore, we don't judge people much on the basis of their behavior. We leave them alone, since for all we know they could be Buddhas. There may be reasons why they act as they do.

*Gang dhül chir yang char - that manifest skilful means.* Whatever people need, the Nirmanakaya will appear in a way that meets those needs. Each manifestation helps someone find a perfect path, even if only a single person.

In our case, we don't have the good fortune to see Buddha in his own form. So what opportunity do we have? All we have is somebody in human form we can talk to, who can communicate to us in various ways and give us the message which will lead us on the path.

In the case of Tsongkhapa, the Nirmanakaya appeared in the form of a saffron-robed monk. To this ultimate protector we bow down. The special quality of the Nirmanakaya is that it is the only form available to us. We cannot see Buddha in Vajradhara form or in Buddha Shakyamuni form. The only form accessible for us is Buddha in human form giving us teachings and information. So, this *Nirmanakaya* form is most important. Therefore think:

This particular Lama Buddha Vajradhara has been manifested to me, as *Nirmanakaya*, to help me. I have neither the ability nor the karma to see a Buddha or a Yidam at this moment. Even if Buddha were standing in front of me right now, I would not be able to see him.

Like Asanga. Though Maitreya was standing right in front of Asanga when he started to sit and work in order to see him, it took him twelve years to really see him. It took not only twelve years, but also great compassion, even being able to cut his flesh, to be able to see Maitreya.<sup>280</sup> Again, I don't have that ability.

But Buddha himself has promised, "In the future I will appear as a Dharma Guide, as a Spiritual Master." I am sure Buddha has not forgotten me, I am sure he has come to help me, too. Here I

<sup>279</sup> Called supreme emanation body.

<sup>280</sup> For the story see: Gehlek Rimpoche, *Lam Rim Teachings*.

have what is best for me, a manifestation body. All the wisdom of the different Buddhas, whatever is helpful, whatever suits me, has manifested and is shown to me here functioning as a full-fledged bikshu. I bow to your feet.

*Looking at the Root Master as Dharmakaya*

*Nyay kün bak chah chye pa drung chung zhing  
pah mey yön ten rin chen tsoh kyi ter  
phen dhe ma lü jung way go chik pu  
je tsün la may zhap la chah tsel lo*

- st. 17. **I praise your abandonment of all wrong,  
Oh precious treasure of infinite excellence,  
Sole door to the source of help and happiness,  
Inestimable Lama, may I become like you!**

How do you abandon all wrongs? By obtaining the wisdom which is the direct perception of emptiness. The direct encounter with emptiness is the only key to abandon all wrong. You praise the lama who has achieved this. Thereby he has accumulated a tremendous treasure of ‘infinite excellence’. Through that he has become the *sole door to help and happiness*. You are praising the lama who has these qualities and pray to become like this *inestimable lama*. Inestimable means priceless. You can’t put a price on it.

The first line tells what it is that the enlightened beings have cleared, in other words how the Dharmakaya comes into being: all delusions and their imprints are absolutely cleared. *Nyay kün* means ‘all faults’, *bak chah* means ‘imprints’ and *drung chung* means ‘cleared’. ‘Ultimate’ means ultimate purification and ultimate achievement, those two. All faults and their imprints have been purified. This verse is showing you that quality. Actually there are two obstacles, *nyon mong pai drip pa*<sup>281</sup> and *she chai drip pa*.<sup>282</sup>

The second line of this verse talks about the countless, immeasurable qualities that have been achieved. *Pah me* means countless, *yön ten* means good qualities; *rin chen* means jewel, *tsoh* is collection, *ter* is treasure. So the Guru has become the treasure, the source of all good qualities.

These are the two components of enlightenment. Even the new-age people will tell you that when you have thrown out something, you have to get something to fill it up. So, ‘Your imprints are cleared and all qualities are acquired. You become the treasure of all good qualities’.

The third and fourth lines are very simple. When you have all the qualities you naturally become a source of help. *Phen dhe* literally means help. But you can see those syllables separately. *Phen* stands for *phen ba* which means help; *dhe* stands for *dhe wa* and that means joy. In Geshe Kelsang’s translation it says ‘benefit and happiness’ Thurman has ‘joy and benefit,’ another one has ‘benefit and bliss’. *Dhe wa* is bliss, no doubt, but in this case ‘bliss’ is not right. Actually *phen* refers to the short-term help which is the relieving of suffering, whereas *dhe* refers to the long-term help, giving ultimate happiness. So, calling it ‘joy’ is okay. The meaning of the third line is, ‘you are the only door through which we receive all benefits’.

*Dharmakaya*. When we talk about Dharmakaya we talk about two kinds of Dharmakaya: the natural<sup>283</sup> and the wisdom Dharmakaya.<sup>284</sup> The nature of a fully enlightened being is the natural Dharmakaya. The natural Dharmakaya means what the ultimate reality of a fully enlightened being is. Earlier we talked *ngo wo nyi*,<sup>285</sup> that is what it is all about.

What is the nature of a fully enlightened being? When you have absolutely cleared all obstacles, the delusions and the imprints of the delusions, that very clarity, that ultimate purity of total exhaustion of delusions and their imprints, that is, I believe, the nature of enlightenment. It is freedom from obstruction, the obstruction being the delusions and the imprints of the delusions. We call it in Tibetan *pang ba*, totally cleared. Maybe in English it is freedom, the freedom that you gain from the total

<sup>281</sup> Skt. *kleshavarana*, obstacles to liberation.

<sup>282</sup> Skt. *jneyavarana*, obstacles to omniscience.

<sup>283</sup> Also called nature kaya; Skt. *svabhavika kaya*; Tib. *ngo wo nyi sku*.

<sup>284</sup> Skt. *jnanakaya*; Tib. *ye shes chos sku*.

<sup>285</sup> See page 99.



exhaustion of obstacles and imprints of obstacles. Probably that is the reality of the fourth kaya, the natural kaya.

Sometimes the natural kaya is taken as a part of *Dharmakaya*, so you divide the *Dharmakaya* into two, its wisdom part and its natural part. This particular verse here refers to the *Dharmakaya* in both ways. *Chye pa drung chung zhing* is probably referring to the *ngo wo nyi ku*, the natural kaya, a part of *Dharmakaya*. *Pah mey yön ten rin chen tsoh kyi ter* refers to the other half of the *Dharmakaya*, the wisdom-kaya, which is the collection of wisdom, the wisdom that really sees the ultimate reality of the two truths. Why do you get it? Wisdom is the thing with which you see absolutely clearly both relative truth and absolute truth together. It is ultimate, and therefore it is the treasury of good qualities. Naturally, when it is the treasury of good qualities, it is the source of all benefit for everybody.

There are a lot of things difficult to understand here, and I didn't even raise the most difficult part. Actually, the body of Lama Buddha Vajradhara is ultimately a wisdom-body. The wisdom-body is freedom from the ordinary body of flesh and bones. When you get such a wisdom-body, free from bones, flesh and all this, then body, mind and speech and all activities actually become one. No separation: body is mind, mind is body, speech is body. We talked about that a lot in Lamrim; there, we left it there as an extraordinary quality of an enlightened being. Here, you have to begin to work on understanding how it is functions and what it is all about. That is difficult and we won't deal with it now.

## b. Making Prostrations to Other Masters

*Lhar chay tön pa sang gyay kün gyi ngö  
gyay tri zhi tong dam chö jung way ney  
phah tsok kün gyi ü na lhang nge wa  
drin chen la ma nam la chah tsel lo*

st. 18    **I praise you, essence of Buddhas, Teacher even of gods,  
Source of the eighty-four thousand teachings.  
You shine resplendent in the hosts of extraordinary beings.  
Oh kind lineage lamas, may I become like you!**

This verse is simpler. It talks about other Spiritual Masters. *Lha* means god, *tön pa* means teacher, so *lhar chay tön pa* means the Teacher of all, including the gods'; this is the actual Buddha, the source of all the 84,000 Dharmas. Such a teacher is outstanding among the Arya Sangha. The *Vajramala* tantra states that the mind of all Lamas is Buddha, the speech of all Lamas is Dharma, the body of all Lamas is Sangha. In this way you have Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, all together. So this verse reminds us to look at our Spiritual Master as a real living Buddha, real Dharma, and real Sangha, all of the Three Jewels. Actually, in the tantra it even says:

Lama Tubwang Dorjechang *is* Buddha, *is* Dharma, *is* Sangha.

*I praise you, essence of Buddhas, Teacher even of gods.* When you talk about Buddha, he is not only Buddha, but he is the greatest teacher, not only for the human beings, but everybody, including the gods. This is the Hindu-Buddhist mythological view of the gods, not the judaeo-christian capital-G God. We are talking about Brahma, Indra, and so on, who came to Buddha and requested him to teach and did attend his teachings. They are supporting him. You can hear that very often. Who is that teacher? In actuality it is all the Buddhas, the nature of all the Buddhas. When I say 'nature', you may take one step back and think that it means emptiness, but I don't use the word in that sense here. I am talking about who that person is. This teacher is actually all enlightened beings. Out of the Three Jewels, this emphasizes the Buddha. The master whom we are praising is in actuality Buddha.

*Source of 84,000 holy teachings.* That sounds funny. You know in India there is festival called *Holi* where they throw bags of color over all the people. The master in actual reality is not only all the Buddhas, but he is the person who can give you all kinds of varieties of teachings or guidance. The figure 84,000 is just an exaggerated figure, although there are historical reasons. It is just supposed to be a large number. It gets correlated with the 84,000 neuroses and 84,000 kinds of illnesses. It just means thousands and thousands. You could also say 'zillions'. Since Dharma is the antidote of the neuroses, there is

84,000 of each of them. The figure goes here and there. Historically speaking, during the Buddha's life-time, it was said that he gave 84,000 bundles of teachings. What is a bundle? That can also vary. It is supposed to be the load that one great elephant can carry. Then there is measurements of a certain type of ink. With a certain quantity of that ink you can write so many bundles, *etc.* When you are referring to the 84,000 Dharmas, you are referring to words, heaps of collected Dharma words, maybe elephant loads or whatever.

However, it is not the words of the Dharma that is important, but the message contained in them. This is the most helpful for us. There are the images of Buddha, then the books and then there are the stupas. These represent body, mind and speech. They are all important, no doubt. In good old Tibet, thousands and thousands of images have been built. That is great, no doubt about it. But if you really look carefully, the images don't talk to you and me. The books do. That makes a big difference. No matter how much you pray and burn incense, bang gongs, or whatever, the images won't talk to you – unless you reach to a particular level of development. When you reach that level though, they don't need to talk to you any more, because you know it. Really true! So the important thing is the Dharma. The books talk to you, they communicate the words to you. And the essence of the words is the message.

If you condense the 84,000 teachings, you get the three baskets: morality [*vinaya*], wisdom [*sutra*] and the metaphysical aspects [*abidharma*].<sup>286</sup> These are the major things. What does this message containing the information of the Three Higher Trainings do? It gives you the information of how to live your life, how to behave. I don't want to say it tells you the right way, because that would be too righteous and that is not necessarily great, as we know very well. On the other hand it is a good way to conduct our lives. What is real morality all about? What is real wisdom all about? What does wisdom do and what does it negate and what do you gain? These are very important points. That is called 'relative Dharma.' This gives you the information. Then the individual puts efforts in based on that. This will give you the results and that is then called 'absolute Dharma.' It is your development.

Can we delete the word 'holy' from this sentence of the 84,000 holy teachings?<sup>287</sup> This word 'holy' gives me two pictures. One is Jerry Falwell, the other is the Indian *Holi* festival. There may be a word for that in the Tibetan root text, but we are not doing a word by word translation. Where is the word 'holy' in the root text anyway? Audience: *dam chö*. Rinpoche: *Dam pai chö* just means Dharma. It really means good, pure Dharma. You don't have to say 'holy'. That would put Jerry Falwell in the picture.

You are praising the lama as the essence of the sources of the Dharma. It is the message contained in the 84,000 teachings. So this is referring to the Dharma.

*You shine resplendent in the host of extraordinary beings.* Actually in Tibetan *phah pa* means Aryas. So this line really says, 'In the collection of the Aryas you are outstanding.' Maybe it is not necessary to say 'host of extraordinary beings'. Literally in Tibetan it would say 'You are the shining figure in the extraordinary assembly'. What it means is, 'You are the most outstanding sangha'. The Tibetan *lhang nge wa* means 'shining'. Audience: In our translation it says 'resplendent'. Rinpoche: I am not objecting, but all in all there are too many words here in this line.

Then the next line: *Oh kind lineage lamas, may I become like you.*

In short, Lama is Buddha, Lama is Dharma, Lama is Sangha. There is a praise used in many Dharma centers that says,

<i>Lama sangye lama chö</i>	The guru is Buddha, the guru is Dharma,
<i>De zhin lama gedün te</i>	the guru is Sangha also;
<i>Kungyi jepo lama te</i>	the guru is the creator of all happiness;
<i>Lama namla kyapsuchi</i>	in all gurus I take refuge

In other words, this particular verse says to look at Buddha Vajradhara as the total refuge: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, Dakini, Yidam, everything, a total refuge. "You are the creator of all, I bow to you." This is taken from the tantras. Again, from the tantras,

To you, who has the body which collects all the Buddhas, Who is the vajra master,  
The root of all the Three Jewels, To you, the Lama, I bow.

<sup>286</sup> Also see Glossary.

<sup>287</sup> This text has been corrected on that point.

Although here this verse is a prostration to all the lamas, it does include the root lama as well. The root guru is not left out but the focal point is all the lamas from whom you have taken teachings.

### c. Making Prostrations to the Lineage Masters

*Dü sum choh chur zhug pay la ma dhang  
rin chen choh sum chah ö tham chay la  
dhey ching mö pei tö yang gya tsor chay  
zhing düil nyam pay lü trül chah tsel lo*

- st. 19. **I praise the Buddhas of every time and place,  
The Three Supreme Jewels, and all that is worthy of honor.  
I eliminate limitless bodies to sing with faith and devotion  
Sweet anthems of praise. May I become like you!**

*I praise the Buddhas of every time and place.* All Lamas of all times and places are objects of reverence, not only the lineage Masters. Although in the outline it mentions the lineage Masters, it covers everybody. You are praising the lamas who have given you teachings in the past, which includes teachings by the root gurus who are no longer living and those of the lineage masters through whom you have received the teachings. Then it covers also all those masters from whom you will receive teachings in future. Further it includes the lamas of the present, from whom you are taking teachings now. All that is included in the Tibetan term *dü sum*. That is translated here as *every time*. It does not mean all the time, but refers to the past, present and future times.

Then the place: that is wherever they are in the ten directions, which is the maximum way of describing the place. It covers all the four cardinal and four ordinal directions plus up and down. You cannot find a single place that doesn't fit in there.

Then the *Three Supreme Jewels and all that is worthy of honor*. The most important and outstanding jewel is the *rin po che sam pai wang ki gyel po*. That is a mythological jewel. It will provide everything you only just think about. Then it increases, maintains and sustains everything. It is like you are not only able to obtain a building, but it is being maintained by itself. You don't have to do any maintenance work. You don't have to worry about mildew getting into your cushions, *etc.* Whatever you want is automatically done, modifications and upgrades, everything. Why is this referred to as 'jewel'? It does not have anything to do with sapphires, diamonds, opals, corals and so on. This is really referring to the mythological wish-fulfilling jewel. It gives you whatever you need, even before you think that you need it. It is an automatically done deal, forever. The Three Supreme Jewels, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, are compared to that wishfulfilling jewel, because they provide you with the information, help you to overcome your neuroses, maintain your spiritual development and upgrade it whenever you are ready or have a need for it, and finally help you to obtain full enlightenment. Therefore they are called 'Jewels'. They are not only jewels, but they are the best of the supreme jewels: *sam pai wang ki gyel po*. Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are even more supreme than the supreme.

You are honoring them with profound faith: *I emanate limitless bodies to sing with faith and devotion sweet anthems of praise*. What you need is intelligent, wisdom-oriented faith which automatically brings devotion. How do you do that? By emanating limitless bodies, equivalent to the number of dust particles in existence. Then you pray, May I become like you.

In short, not only the Lama is the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha, but all Buddhas, Dharmas, and Sanghas, all fully enlightened beings, Bodhisattvas, *etc.*, are manifested by the Lama. This verse bows down to all the Lamas of the ten directions and the three times, all Buddhas, Dharma, Sangha. I bow down to everyone who is worthy to be bowed to, everyone who is worthy of respect. With wholehearted faith, with praise, music and everything, I bow down with as many bodies as I can, manifesting myself and praising in Samantabhadra-style.

You may need some clarification here. I said that all Buddhas, for example, Heruka, Yamantaka, or Guhyasamaja, as well as all Bodhisattvas, are manifestations of the Lama. How do they come to exist? They are manifested by the fully enlightened Buddha, Buddha Vajradhara. Therefore, all the Yidams, all the Buddhas are manifestations of Lama Dorjechang.

And I don't think it is too surprising if you don't understand that yet. Even Marpa got into a problem with Naropa because what he saw was the separation.<sup>288</sup> That is the true problem, the ultimate obstacle of dualistic view: separation of the Lama and the Yidam, seeing the Yidam-mandala and the Lama as separate beings. That is probably the ultimate obstacle of dualism we have to overcome. So, not only is the Lama seen to be Buddha, Dharma *etc.*, but all enlightened beings are manifestations of the Lama! The verse indicates this point by taking a turn in the opposite direction, making it clearer, more vivid, and forceful, by telling it is not only this way but also that way.

*May I become like you! Chah tsel lo*, what does that word mean? It has three categories, the body *chah*, the speech *chah* and the mind *chah*.

*Praise by body*, the body *chah*, is giving a gesture of respect, like making a body prostration or saluting.

*Praise by speech* is remembering the kindness by acknowledging the quality and then expressing it through some artistic medium, like music, poetry, or drawing. Of course, you can express through body or mind, but technically all this comes under the category of speech-activity of praise, because these are also ways of communicating. In whatever way the message can be conveyed, either by the right or the left brain, it is called speech-prostration.

*Praise by mind*. That is the most important one, the mind *chah*. It is actually your mind which is impressed by the quality of the Lama Buddha Vajradhara, and remembers his kindness, and this combination helps to bring about a profound reliance, and a profound faith that is not blind but intelligent.

*Faith*. You have to remember, particularly in Vajrayana, there is really no room for blind faith without a strong ground or basis. When there is no strong ground, you can fall; either you just believe what anyone tells you, or you just follow a teacher because your friends follow him, and when one day you're not friends anymore, you'll fall back. So, blind faith is not an advantage, on the contrary, it is a total disadvantage.

Entering into Vajrayana is no problem, even with blind faith. But once you have entered, if you have no strong grounding, there is a danger that somewhere in the middle you will have problems due to I call *chang le she rap*, corrupted wisdom. People often experience this. You are half way through and all of a sudden you think, "Maybe I've gotten in over my head here, maybe I should withdraw, maybe it is one of these cults, maybe I am brainwashed, maybe I've been blind, who knows?" And if you encounter talkative people who on top of that say, "Oh yeah, this is a great way to... blah blah blah," then you get really shaky and worried, "This is a total set-up, a trap." You should have raised your questions and doubts earlier instead of in the middle, because then you get a lot of downfalls, a lot of disadvantages, all sort of problems. For these reasons, intelligent faith is welcomed and blind faith is totally rejected.

*Secrecy*. That is the main reason for the secrecy, too. During the initiation, remember, you are given commitments and, of all the downfalls, they keep on repeating the downfall of secrecy and the Vajra Master downfall<sup>289</sup>, the most important ones. A lot of people worry about this, "Oh, this is secret, I cannot talk to people about Yamantaka, I cannot tell that I am doing Yamantaka." That is good, but it is not the reason. In Tibet, Yamantaka hangs all over the temples and everywhere, and everybody talks about it, whether initiated or not. If they say the Yamantaka sadhana, they openly say they do so. I don't mean that you should do this here, you may have a problem, so better not do it. But some people get scared, "I may get a downfall or break my commitments if I talk about it." What breaking the commitments really means is misunderstanding it. If you understand it halfway and get a misunderstanding [and yet talk about it], then that is a downfall, a terrible downfall for the individual practitioner and for everybody. In order to avoid that, you need intelligent faith. Secrecy is maintained until the individual develops a quite good understanding with intelligent faith; until then secrecy is necessary to prevent misunderstanding. This is one of the reasons why.

<sup>288</sup> For the story see page 27. Also told in: Nalanda translation committee, *The Life of Marpa the Translator*, p. 92-93. H. Guenther, *The Life and Teaching of Naropa*, p. 107.

<sup>289</sup> Point 7 and 1 of the fourteen tantric root downfalls. Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Tantric Grounds and Paths*, p. 64-65. Sermey Khensur Lobsang Tharchin, *Six-Session Guru yoga*, p. 105-107, 111-112.

*Valid reasons – perfect wisdom.* Why did I say this? The actual mind-prostration is knowing the quality, knowing the special results that you can attain, knowing the benefit you'll really have. Then it is intelligent faith, because what you believe is truly supported by reasoning. When you have strong reasons, it is no longer blind faith. Right? You have perfect reasons, not just something to say. Something to say, everybody has. We Tibetans have a saying, "Even when a son kills his father, he will have something to say." He will have some excuse. Just something to say is not the point; the point is to have a valid reason.

What does valid reason mean? It means that perfect wisdom cannot contradict it. Do you hear me? A valid reason is a reason that cannot be refuted by wisdom, because it is right. Wisdom has to be right; that is called valid reason. Once you have a valid reason to believe or to follow, then you have what is called intelligent faith. Until you have that, it is either blind faith or shaky ground.

You know, – I am sorry, during the teaching we can say anything, during personal conversations I can't do it, so I will take the opportunity here – people often say, "I feel it, I felt it, I get the vibration." All of this is total bullshit, without a single valid reason in that. "I felt it, I knew it, I feel it in my body all over"; these are some kind of mind-mix, mental suggestions you want to believe so much that then you see or feel it. That is what is called shaky ground, the true sign of shaky ground. A valid reason is a reason that you put up that cannot be refuted by perfect wisdom.

I'll give you a very simple explanation. Two things come to mind. One is an old Tibetan example. Suppose you were riding through nomad land, on a plateau, and a long distance off you saw something that looked like a human being. You think, "Oh there is a person coming," and a friend who is with you looks carefully and says, "Yes, someone is coming, I wonder if it is a robber?" As you approach, sometimes you see it, sometimes you don't. You meet another traveler and ask him, "Is somebody coming over there?" and he answers, "I don't see anybody." Then, when you get closer, you say, "Oh, now I see it, it is really a tree-trunk."

Your earlier reasoning was, "There is a human being coming," and you even saw it move. When you travel all day crossing those plateaus on your horse, you really do see things move that aren't actually moving. So, you believe there is a traveler coming from the other direction, until someone says there is nobody. Then you begin to have doubts, you think maybe you're wrong, you're on shaky ground. Then, when you see the tree trunks yourself, the idea of them being a human being is gone, no longer there. Not only that, you realize now that what you saw earlier as a moving human being was a sort of mirage. So, the earlier reason is invalid, the object you tried to establish, a traveler coming, is gone, refuted by the valid reason of direct visual perception (you saw it), confirmed by another traveler. This is a direct eye-seen case, a case of valid visual perception.

Now the second example. In the case of things you can't see with your eyes, what can you do? You can use your intelligent reasoning ability as far as you can and when you cannot go any further, you use reliable sources, such as quotations from the Buddha and other reliable sources.

*Three types of knowledge.* So, there are two types of knowledge, *direct knowledge* and *indirect knowledge*. Indirect knowledge again has two types, indirect and *extremely indirect knowledge*. Indirect knowledge cannot be seen in black and white, or perceived through the usual senses, so you have to rely on logical reasoning or reliable quotations. Even in Buddhist logic, we do not only totally depend on the logic itself, sometimes we also use quotations from earlier masters. Logical reasoning must be proven to be valid, by checking its logic, and checking its conclusions against reliable statements. Those earlier masters have been proved to be right, they have been checked.

So, you should work to gain whatever firmly grounded understanding you can. Notice that you do not really believe that you could rely on 'feelings' alone. Sorry, maybe I have been too strong or vehement in refuting those feelings and impressions, but this was my only opportunity [laughing]. In one-to-one talks I can't go against it, but in reality this is what is valid.

*Tsel*, the other half of the word *chah tsel lo* is most important. It means seeking. *Chah* indicates respect, *tsel*, seeking to attain what you admire: 'I admire your qualities, your quality of body, your quality of mind, and your quality of speech. I want and need those qualities.' *Lo* is the conclusion word, it has no meaning.

## 2. Making Offerings<sup>290</sup>

*Merit or luck.* Offerings are necessary in order to increase merit or ‘luck’. Somebody asked me yesterday, “What do you mean by luck? You must mean good karma.” It is good karma, no doubt, but good karma alone is not enough to reach enlightenment, you also have to be fortunate. Even to develop bodhimind and understanding of emptiness, you have to be fortunate. If you say ‘fortunate’ is that karma? Yes, it is karma. But is just having good karma alone enough? No. The specific thing called ‘luck’, which is definitely part of good karma, is also necessary. Without merit, as we call it, one cannot obtain enlightenment, or even bodhimind, or the wisdom that perfectly understands the nature of reality.

Luck comes from accumulating merit. Making offerings is one of the best ways to do this. Acts of generosity to needy beings are certainly good, however, as a field of merit, the enlightened beings, all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, are even more important. This is not because they are the most important persons, but because, by offering to them, the person making the offerings accumulates much more and more powerful merit. So it is recommended that offerings should form a major part of our practice. The commentary says:

Offering to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions brings great merit, no doubt. But making offerings to your Spiritual Master, even making an offering to a hair pore of your Spiritual Master, will accumulate much more merit.

The simple reason for this difference is that when you make an offering to the Buddhas, you accumulate the merit of offering, but do not gain the merit of them accepting it. When you make offerings to your Spiritual Master, you not only accumulate the merit of offering (this will be a good fund raiser for Jewel Heart!) but also the merit of the offerings being accepted. You get twice the benefit. If you make offerings to the Spiritual Master:

All the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions enter into the body of the Lama and accept your offering.

In addition, when you cannot do your tsoh offering, buying your Guru lunch substitutes for the tsoh offering. Remember? Looks like I am buying my dinner here! But really, that is a rule. A number of times, when the Kyabje Rinpoches were alive, we gave them some money to sponsor two dinners a month. Maybe the *labrang* did not make the dinners, but we sponsored it. This was the easy way to fulfill the commitment. So the Lamas accept offerings on behalf of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. They don’t have to say this, it automatically works that way.

*Void and bliss.* Not only that. The offering itself, the material and the action of offering, the object or recipient of offering, and the one who makes the offering, all are to be regarded as being in the nature of void and bliss. Whatever you are offering, let’s say a turtleneck, be it cotton or wool or whatever, is actually made out of the combination of bliss and void. The person making the offering is also in the nature of bliss-void and the object of offering, in this case the Lama, is also in the nature of bliss-void. It is accepted in the sphere of bliss-void. This goes for any offering. It is the special quality of the *maha anu yoga tantra* and you do it that way in all the *maha anu yoga tantra* offerings. I am not sure though whether they accept invisible checks – sometimes bliss-void can be invisible! Audience: You can make out a void check! Rinpoche: Did you know that you accumulate negative merit for that? [joke]

*Why are you making these offerings?* You are offering to the Supreme Field of Merit, the Lama himself and his circle, in order to boost and re-start and remind him of the combination of wisdom and compassion with joy, which recognizes emptiness. You do that with every offering, even the offering blessing. There it says,

Nature pure, offerings appear, arousing bliss-void, filling space.

That is the quality of each and every offering. It is *nature pure*, because it is the combination of compassion and wisdom. The *appearance*: it looks like whatever the offering is. It is either water, or flowers, or trees, stumps, fruits, incense or whatever. It is the appearance of the offerings themselves, whatever they are. The *purpose* is to arouse joy. Although there is a continuation of growing joy which recognizes

<sup>290</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 124-156. Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 98-110.

emptiness, however, by offering it helps to re-arouse the joy. So the purpose is not to have a lot of flowers up there, not to have a lot of incense burning, but to re-arouse the bliss-void combination. That joy also is uncontaminated, extraordinary joy. You have to think that such a joy has been re-aroused.

How do you make offerings? There are five ways:

- a. Outer Offerings.
- b. Inner Offerings.
- c. Secret Offerings.
- d. Suchness Offerings.
- e. Offering of Self as Service and Offering of Medicine.

### a. Outer Offerings

1. External offerings, which has: a) four water offerings, b) usual outer offerings
2. Five Sense Offerings
3. Mandala Offerings
4. Practice Offerings

### External offerings

Actually the commentary discusses this according to the Heruka offering, which is very detailed. I better skip that.<sup>291</sup> Remember that you have to bless properly anything that you offer. If you don't bless it, not only will you not get the benefits of offering, but also you get the downfall of offering the wrong stuff, the wrong things. Each offering has a certain ghost, for example if the water-offering is not blessed, a ghost called 'the movable ghost' mixes with it, and as a result of that you cannot sit down, when you want to settle down and meditate, you can't, you become a hopper, you become jumpy, things like that. That is why offerings have to be blessed.

I am not going much into detail. The blessings are the same as in the Yamantaka sadhana or the Vajrayogini sadhana. In each ritual, you follow the particular words, but the visualization and how it functions is exactly the same, nothing different. That may cover.

*Mudras*. Here I have to touch on the mudra part of it. When you make the offerings you also perform mudras. What are mudras? There are hand gestures which are called *mudras*, but also they are always connected to the *Mahamudra*. You know how in the tsoh offering you always say, *Ting dzin ngah dhang chah gyei jin lap pei...* *Ting dzin* is meditation, *ngah* is mantra and *chah gya* is mudra. So in one way it is a hand gesture, but on the other hand *chah gya* is the sign of ultimate, total enlightenment.

The hand gesture is the external message. The internal message is the great *Mahamudra* and it is the realization of wisdom, the ultimate level of wisdom. The Gelugpas talk so much about the 'Middle Path'; however, it is nothing but emptiness. The Kagyupas and the Sakyapas talk so much about *Mahamudra*; it is nothing but wisdom. The Nyingmapas talk a lot about *dzok chen*; it is nothing but wisdom. You may call it *Uma* [Middle Path], *Mahamudra*, or *Dzok chen*. I don't know whether the followers of these systems can get it straight, but if they can, they are going to land in the wisdom. For example, the hand gesture of Buddha Vajradhara [hands holding bell and vajra crossed in front of chest] is the signal of union. That means the union of wisdom and bliss or better joy. (This word 'bliss' is bothering me.) Bell and vajra alone are signals. Hand gestures are further signs.

As for the hand gestures, they come out of three points: vajra fist, vajra folding, vajra net.<sup>292</sup> Most commonly used is the vajra folding gesture. Any mudra whatever has to come from one of those three, but I am not going to talk about that in detail.

Anything you offer, you offer to the field of merit in order to bring joy to the body of the recipient. You do the visualization from your heart level. You generate offering deities from there, boys or girls, goddesses, dakas or dakinis, whatever you want. The signal for that is a little snap of the fingers. At that moment you think that an offering deity has come out of your heart. That offering deity does not just pop

<sup>291</sup> Literature: Akhu Sherab, *Sri Chakrasamvara, Ein Kommentar zur Praxis der Vorstellungsstufe nach der Luipa – Tradition*, p. 69-71.

<sup>292</sup> Fist: hands in a fist, thumb in. Fold: hands folded like at taking refuge. Net: fingers interlaced as in Christian prayer.

out and go round, not knowing what to do, but comes out with a very majestic gesture of beautiful, smooth movements, dancing in what is called lotus-movement. To show that, we perform the mudra called 'lotus gesture', very smoothly, opening one finger after another, respectfully, and very majestically and with sweet movements. The lotus-movement resembles the petals of the lotus opening and closing. Many people do it too quickly, but in the Tsongkhapa order that is not allowed. Go slowly. You have to do it three times. If there is no time, just do it once, gracefully, not too quickly.

Out of the lotus-movement, the offering-deity's hands pick up the offering material and offer it. Sometimes they have four hands, sometimes two; do whatever is convenient for you. If they have four hands, the first two hands hold vajra and bell and the second two hands hold whatever is being offered.

*Vajra and bell.* The vajra is the reminder of bliss and the bell of the void, and also they are hand-implements of the deity. So you have to show them the same respect as you do to images of enlightened beings. In other words, you cannot jump over them, put your feet on top of them, or put them on the bare ground without any cloth. It is not allowed. Every time you hold vajra and bell you have to remind yourself of wisdom as well as bliss. It is a signal you get, it is a sign; just like a wedding ring, it has to remind you of something you have to remember.

Now how to ring the bell; the problem is that even lamas don't follow this rule. You should do it very gracefully. You do it at the heart-level. There are a lot of reasons for that; wisdom is within the mind which is located at the heart.

I also want to mention here that people should not bring vajra and bell to teachings. Not only is it not necessary, it is uncalled for. You only take them out and use them during certain practices. Apart from that, it is not right to put them out as an exhibition in front of you. It is not done. As a matter of fact vajra and bell are secret objects, supposed to be hidden rather than exhibited. Normally everybody uses photographs as their secret objects, not the actual instruments, but even these are not normally displayed. When you recite sadhanas and use them, then it is all right to take them out. During the teachings, they are not needed. I just wanted to mention this.

According to the *Lama Chöpa* there are ten outer offerings: 1. *argham*, water for drinking, 2. *padyam*, water for bathing, 3. *enchamanan*, water for rinsing the mouth, 4. *drokchanam*, water for sprinkling, 5. *pushpe*, flowers, 6. *dhupe*, incense, 7. *aloke*, light, 8. *gandhe*, perfume, 9. *naivyadya*, food, 10. *shabda*, music.

*Damaru.* At *shabda*, you ring the bell and you play the *damaru*. The *damaru* is the signal which hits the *tummo*,<sup>293</sup> so you play it in order to raise the *tummo*. In the Tsongkhapa tradition, it is played at the *tummo*-level; most of the Kagyu also do the same thing. A lot of people play the *damaru* in a monkey-style, which is, again, wrong and not allowed. It should be slow in the beginning and end abruptly with a quick stronger sound. Some people not only play the *damaru* and the bell in a funny style, but also hold the *damaru* higher. That also is not allowed, totally wrong; the *damaru* must be held down at the navel-level. In our lineage, this is particularly emphasized. If you could really see Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche or Kyabje Ling Rinpoche or Song Rinpoche, you would see they have the things done according to the instructions. Normally, this is not taught in the *Lama Chöpa* teachings; you would have been given special instructions occasionally during that period. Even though there is not much time, I just show you this now and Kuchok Chödrak<sup>294</sup> will show you the other mudras tomorrow; you divide into separate groups and learn them.

*kyap gön je tsün la ma khor chay la*  
*na tsoh chö trin gya tsor büi wa nee*

st. 20.     **Precious lama, my Refuge and Protector,  
To you and your circle,  
I present oceans of clouds of various offerings.**

This verse is referring to the principal of the Supreme Field of Merit, my precious root master, my protector. He is precious, because he is the source of all liberation and the source of all joy, happiness and

<sup>293</sup> Psychic heat.

<sup>294</sup> Chödrak Rinpoche has lived and taught in Ann Arbor for a number of years. He passed away in 2001.



total enlightenment. Not only that, he also has the three kindnesses. He is my refuge, because he is the collection of the Three Jewels. He is the collection of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Even if you look at a single person, this is important to mention. The body of the Supreme Field of Merit is part of the Sangha. The speech is Dharma. It is the speech, the instructions and advice, followed by the development. So the development is the translation of the instructions. And the mind is Buddha, the all-knowing, awakened state.

The verse introduces the intention to make offerings to the Supreme Field of Merit. *Kyap gön* is protector, *jetsün lama* is venerable Guru, *khör chay la* means with your retinue. We could delete one of these words, *je tsün* which has probably been translated as ‘precious’ or *kyab* which means ‘protector’. It is not really needed. One of these words is extra. We should never forget Allen Ginsberg’s advice of using minimum syllables for maximum meaning. We could almost just say *refuge lama* instead of that whole line [laughs]. Then *to you and your circle* tells you that the lama is surrounded by his retinue.

Then the next line says *I present oceans of clouds of various offerings*. These are the actually arranged and mentally created offerings in a variety like clouds or like the ocean. They are countless, endless. In other words, I present endless varieties of offerings.

#### *Four water offerings*

*kö lek rin chen ö bar no yang lay*  
*dhah je dü tsi chu zhi dhal gyi bap*

#### st. 20. **Four streams of cleansing nectar gently fall From magnificent vases ablaze with jewels.**

You visualize countless offering deities generated from your heart. They pick up beautiful containers for the various offerings: *magnificent vases ablaze with jewels*. In other words, the vases they carry are made of precious metals, decorated by jewels. *Kö lek* means well-decorated, *rin chen* means jewel-natured and *ö bar* means radiant. So these vessels are not tarnished, but shiny, radiating light.

This indicates that even when we make our little water offerings, the bowls should not be stained or tarnished. We often use bowls which have almost become green inside. That is not the way to do it. The material of the bowls preferably should be gold, or silver, or crystal, but copper, or brass, wood, or even plastic, will do. Whatever it is, if it works, it is okay. But you know its value is measured in that way and in accordance with it you accumulate merit. It is not a bad idea to get a golden or silver set of seven offering bowls for yourself. It is a good investment and you also accumulate merit all the time, because you use it regularly. It may even be better than putting money in the stock market. We should not just put a glass of water over there, regardless of whether they are going to drink it or not. Rather we could be putting cups and saucers together, beautifully designed, with artistic touch.

On your altar you may only have room for some bowls of water, but in our visualization you should always have millions of bowls of water. These you should also not visualize as ordinary cups or glasses; they should be made of jewels. They are also not on ordinary trays, but on huge and open trays beautifully decorated with radiating jewels.

In any case, whatever you use, it has to be clean, shiny, artistically presented, of valuable material and big.

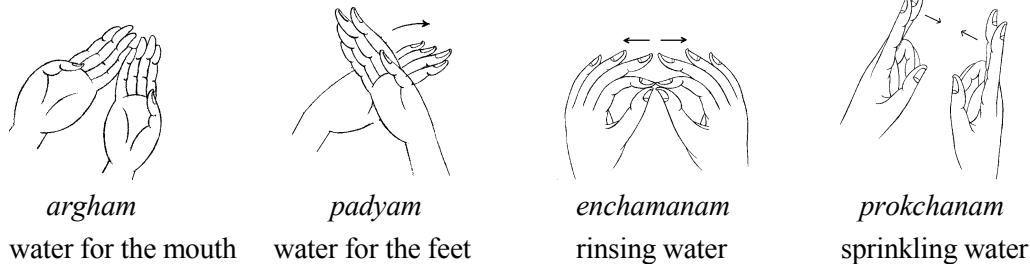
*Dhah je dü tsi* is here translated as ‘cleansing nectar’, and *chu* is water or river or stream. So the four waters are what we have just mentioned. The word *dhah je*, purifying, is important. In Tibetan, the word *dhah je* is synonymous with water, which is purifying substance.

There are different ways of purifying; here the purpose is purifying *ordinary perception* and *conceptualization*. In Vajrayana, in all four classes of tantra, the obstacles are ordinary appearance and ordinary conception. Whether you say ‘purifying’ or ‘free of’ it has this meaning. In many places, the *Lama Chöpa* (and also the Mahamudra) does not give you the usual words, but only half the words, so you have to pick it up the actual meaning. So *dhah je* means ‘free of’ and that means free of ordinary perception and conceptualization.

In Vajrayana in particular, the offerings are purified by inseparable bliss-void. In that sense there are four pure water offerings. When we talk about the offerings, we understand that the offering itself, the person

performing the offering, the object of offering and the offering material, are all free of ordinary perception and conceptualization. Because they are free of all obstacles, these four waters are called nectar.

The classification of four waters in the *Lama Chöpa* is unique and not generally applicable. The extended *Lama Chöpa* has those four water offerings, while the shorter one does not have them.<sup>295</sup> The commentary says that *argham* here refers to washing the hands, *padyam* is washing the body below the knees. In the Indian tradition, when you just arrive in one of the pure places, they will wash your feet. *Enchamanam* is rinsing the mouth, and *drokchanam* is sprinkling water.<sup>296</sup> So you have generated offering goddesses who do all this, wash the Lama's hands, wash the feet up to the knees, give water for rinsing the mouth, and sprinkle water at the chest. Each of these has its own mudra.



*Four streams of nectar gently fall.* These four streams or rivers flow very smoothly. Remember, in Yamantaka, the order of the offerings is *argham*, *padyam*, *gandhe*, *pushpe*... *Gandhe* comes first. It is the same thing here. With the four water offerings *drokchanam* comes before the offerings of flowers, incense, food and so forth.

Where does the radiating, beautiful jewel tray come from? It is clean, pure, made out of jewels, well-designed and does not take a lot of space, yet it is huge. It comes out of the union of compassion and wisdom. I am going to avoid the 'bliss-void'. What are you offering? Actually it is again compassion and wisdom, but in the form of the four beautiful streams, which have the eight qualities of pure water.<sup>297</sup> You can offer the water for drinking, *argham*, into the hand of the lama or to his whole body. You don't pour it into his mouth. The water for washing the feet, *padyam*, goes to the feet. The mouth-washing water, *enchamanam*, goes to the mouth of the lama. You make the gesture of offering water to the mouth and lastly you offer the sprinkling water, *drokchanam*, with the appropriate gesture. Traditionally, in India, where it is very hot, you would offer sprinkling water to people to make them feel cool. If you have time during the offering period, you can dissolve the offering deity after each offering, then generate another one for the next offering and so on. When you sing the tunes slowly, you have time to do all the mudras separately. But if you are simply reading the text, it is too fast. In that case you do the generating and dancing gestures only at the beginning and in between you just continuously make the offering gestures. However, in your visualization you should not just visualize one single offering deity doing everything. You have to generate many offering deities. If you don't like to generate female offering deities you can generate offering guys.

Audience: Why are the thumbs tucked in whenever offering mudras are made?

Rinpoche: You begin with the vajra-folding gesture. In that gesture you can see some differences between Buddhists and Hindus. The Hindus won't tuck their thumbs in. The Buddhists, even when normally folding their hands, tuck their thumbs in. The reason is that the thumbs represent jewels. So the folding of your hands is not just an empty gesture of two hands clapped together. This empty hand could give you nice things but it could slap you too! It is true, the traditional teachings will tell you that. During the 1977 election in India, the break away group from Indira Gandhi's party chose the hand as a symbol in that way. The man who is the present Indian prime minister, Vajpayee, was in opposition at that time and he said, 'I am going to use traditional Indian philosophy. This hand coming out is to slap you.' I

<sup>295</sup> The Vajrayogini self-initiation has the four water offerings accompanied by verses.

<sup>296</sup> The hand gesture is the same as for *shabda*, music. There it indicates drumming, here it indicates the kusha grass with which the water is sprinkled onto the chest to give the body coolness.

<sup>297</sup> The eight qualities of the water are: cool, delicious, light, smooth, clear, with good smell (due to wholesome saffron put in), easy to digest and soothing the throat. Explanation of the meaning: Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, p. 146; Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in Our Hands* vol. 1, p. 129-130; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Joyful Path of Good Fortune*, p. 50.

began to realize then, that the empty hand can be a different signal. Therefore the hand should be holding the jewel.

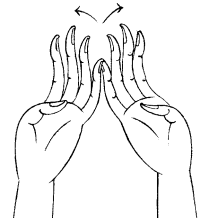
### Other External Offerings

This includes what is called ‘all necessary things including music’.

### Offering of Flowers, *pushpe*

*Dhong po sil ma treng wa pel leg ma  
dzay pay me toh sa dhang bar nang gang.*

- st. 21. **Blossoming trees, lovely flowers, bouquets and garlands,  
Cover the ground and fill the sky.**



Again you generate offering goddesses from your heart and you offer lotus flowers, utpalas, kumudas, such rare flowers, not the usual flowers which are available in the super markets. First the text mentions the *dhong po*, that is lotus flowers in pots, whole rose bushes, or blossoming trees, not a simple, chopped-off lotus, but lotus flowers still on the stem and continuously growing. The offering goddesses leave the flowering trees in front of the objects of offering. Don't put them on their heads! Further, there are loose petals of flowers, *sil ma*, which are just strewn around. Also bouquets comes mostly under *sil ma*. If you have plaited flowers you can put them on their heads, or you can put garlands around their necks. *Treng wa* are the garlands to be hung around the necks. The word *pe leg ma* means garlands that you can wear round the neck and also very long garlands which you can use as a decoration, like a curtain-type of thing or woven into canopies. So by just listing four words in Tibetan, the text gives you a lot of things and how to arrange them. The effect of the loose flowers strewn around not only looks nice but also gives off a beautiful fragrance everywhere.

All these various types of arranged flowers should cover all ground and fill all space. So when you think of *pushpe*, don't think of just a little flower or the hand mudra, but think of zillions of flowers everywhere, more than the tulips in Holland in April and May, the peak of the tulip season. There are all types of flowers in different colors, roses, irises, marigolds, carnations, daffodils, birds of paradise, chrysanthemums, sunflowers, dahlias, beyond imagining. There should be an abundance of flowers.

Like in the verse before, these offerings should be presented also in *magnificent vases ablaze with jewels*. You can present all the offerings in these vases, not only the four waters, but also the flowers, incense, light, and so forth, even the trees and tree trunks.

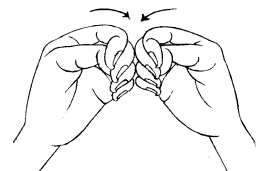
These offerings are actually not for the objects of offering. They are for yourself. You need to accumulate merit and do purification. Everything should be as precious as possible. Offerings are such that you have to do whatever you are capable of. There is no particular limit. That is why I said if you can afford to have bowls of pure gold you should have them. If it can be decorated with emeralds and so forth, then that is what it should be. If you cannot afford that, then get pure silver. If you cannot afford that, use copper, then brass, zinc, glass, plastic or wooden bowls. Whatever is the most suitable for the individual, that is what should be used. You have to judge that, nobody else can judge.

While you recite the verses and visualize, you also do the corresponding mudras. There will be one for each of these two-line verses.

### Offering of Incense, *dhupe*

*dri zhim pö kyee dhü pa ben dur yey  
yar kyey ngön pö trin gyi lha lam trik*

- st. 21. **The heavens billow with blue summer clouds  
Of lazulite smoke from sweet fragrant incense.**



Here you are not going to offer second quality incense. It should have a good smell, not the sharp smell of this particular Indian incense which gives you a headache all the time, but a gentle, mild, smooth smell. There many good types of incense from India and also from Tibet. They should have a mixture of twenty-five different substances in it. The most important ones of those are dust of sandal wood, agar wood and camphor. Camphor has been very strongly used by the Indian tradition. Further there should be deer musk

and negi. Tomo Geshe Rinpoche has the best incense, very mild. They include deer musk and negi, which is some kind of shell, not armadillo, but a sea animal's shell, which could be abalone. In India, all the incense makers buy it and it is extremely expensive, thousands of dollars for a pound. In the East, when it comes to the offering of smell, we only offer incense. There is no other system but to make all these substances into powder and burn that. But now we also have very beautiful, expensive perfumes. You can offer these, provided that other people are not allergic against them. So you can now offer 'samsara'. Apparently that also comes in a spray. If you don't like that, use Chanel No. 5 or Estee Lauder. If you offer perfumes, the last line *lazulite smoke from sweet fragrant incense* can be skipped, because you don't have smoke!

Then you also have to know how to use it. When the Loseling incense was first made, the former abbot of Loseling, Risung Rinpoche, who has now become the *Changdze Chogye*, kept on insisting that Loseling incense was the best. So we had a competition in my house in Ann Arbor. We burnt several kinds of incense and the Loseling incense smelled the worst! I said to him that it smelled like shit and finally Risung Rinpoche said, "Yes, it does. What happened?" I suggested that perhaps his people did not know how to use the substances properly. Risung Rinpoche said a monk called Namgyal had made them and he was from a certain monastery in Tsang, in Tibet, which was famous for making incense. We went through all the substances and they had used them all. When we came to the *negi*, Risung Rinpoche said, "Yes, we used that, too, but it smells terrible!" So I asked, "Did you rub this *negi* continuously, without stopping?" He said that they had rubbed it, but stopped in between, and that was the problem. You are supposed to rub this *negi* for something like 78 hours or however long it takes, without interruption. In Old Tibet, one person would start, then another would relieve him after a while and keep the process going. If you do that for quite a while, the substance will give off a tremendously beautiful smell. Until then, however, it will smell like shit.

Here in the text the incense is compared to *ben dur yey*, that is lapis lazuli. It is not the actual incense which looks like lapis lazuli, but the color of the smoke. This smoke is further compared to great clouds that bring rain storms to you. So these lapis-like incense clouds fill up all space. The smoke wafting from them collects in space and transforms into beautiful shapes like the eight lucky symbols and any other joyful signs.

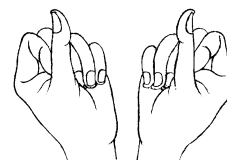
*Lha lam* is the place of the gods. The humans' place is on the earth and the gods are believed to live in the air, so *lha lam* means space.

The mudra for *dhupe* is two parallel fists with the wrists down and this gesture symbolizes the rubbing of the *negi*. It can also symbolize the crushing of spices with a bottle, just like you can see in some cooking shows on TV.

*Offering of Light, aloke*

*Nyi dha nor bu rap bar drön may tsoh  
tong sum mün sel ö zer tse ga gö.*

st. 22. **Joyful light from suns and moons, flaming lamps,  
And glittering jewels  
Dispel the darkness of a billion worlds.**



*Dhipe* or *aloke* is the offering of light. The mudra for the light offering according to the *maha anu yoga tantra* system is two fists with wrists up and the thumbs sticking out in the middle of the fists. In *kriya* and *charya* tantra the same light offering has a different mudra, identical to the raised finger salute, the good old American mudra.

If these offerings are chanted, you can do the long mudra. It all depends on how fast it is going. Mind you, the hand mudras are not compulsory at all. Don't do it like a monkey in the temple. This is the example Trijang Rinpoche used to give. If a monkey is in a temple, it does all kind of things, ringing all the bells, hitting the damaru very wild and so on.

*Joyful light from suns and moons, flaming lamps.* In the light offering you don't just offer a small candle light, but the light of the sun, *nyi*, and its reflection, the moon light, *dha*. You can also offer the light from electric lamps. The great Kunu Lama, Kunu Tendzin Gyantzen who was in India for a long time, writes in his commentary on the bodhimind,

The light generated by the sun, the moon and electricity, no doubt is great.  
But it will not clear the darkness within the individual, whereas the bodhimind does.

*And glittering jewels.* You also offer shiny jewels and all other different lamps. *Tsoh* in Tibetan stands for ‘collection’ or ‘etcetera’. The tremendous amount of light coming from them clears all the darkness on, above, and below the ground, everywhere.

*Tong sum* are the three different areas from which the darkness is cleared. The purpose of light is to clear darkness. That is why the verse says, *dispel the darkness of a billion worlds*. You don’t want to clear the darkness in the small, little area where you are, but everywhere. You could also say that you want to clear the darkness of hell, heaven and earth. Each of the light rays dispelling the darkness is also in joyful nature, joyfully playing.

The light rays radiating everywhere also create images of different offerings, such as the eight lucky signs<sup>298</sup> and other joyful symbols in a beautiful artistic presentation. The Merit Field will see that and enjoy it.

#### *Offering of Scented Water, gandhe*

*ga bur tsen den gur kum dri gö pay*  
*pö chü tso chen kor yuk kün ne kyil.*

- st. 22. **Vast saffron, sandalwood, and camphor-scented seas  
Swirl out to the horizon in every direction.**



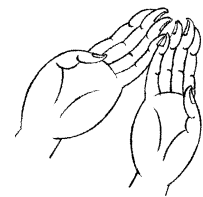
This is about the scented water. The purpose of the *gandhe* offering and the incense offering is almost similar. Incense offering is more of an external thing, whereas scented water is more of a physical thing. It goes on the body, rather than into the environment. So may be it is better to bring the perfume offering from the incense offering to this offering of scented water. Perhaps you can use it in both ways. It is not a big deal. *Ga bur* is camphor, *tsen den* is sandalwood, *gur kum* is saffron. So the water that you sprinkle is not ordinary water, but comes out of the bliss-void combination. The relative material you are using is made out of the essence of camphor, sandalwood and saffron, separately or in combination, also rose water. This gives a cooling effect and also smells good. *Kor yuk* means that this water is not only sprinkled around, but the whole environment is filled up with it. It is like a shower that goes everywhere. *Swirl out to the horizon in every direction*. It is not a limited kind of offering, but unlimited, abundant – if you can stand the smell!

Actually each of the hand gestures for all these offerings should be made in such a way that you keep your hands together. If you have your hands separated a lot your movements are like that of a drama performance. You should keep the hands at the heart level, not separating too much. That represents the combination of wisdom and compassion.

#### *Food Offering, naividya<sup>299</sup>*

*Ro gyei chü dhen za chay tung wa dhang*  
*lha dhang mi yi zhel zay lhuin por pung.*

- st. 23. **Nourishing delicacies of hundred flavors  
Are massed in mountains of divine and human food.**



The food you offer has a hundred different tastes. This is actually not difficult to count. Basically it is sweet, sour, salty, sharp, bitter and astringent<sup>300</sup>; then sweet-sweet, sweet and sour, sweet and salty, sweet and hot, sweet and bitter, sour-sour, sour-sweet, and all possible combinations. These are the basic tastes human beings have – really true. All tastes are variations of these. Basically there are six tastes and all six of them are divided by six which comes to thirty-six. These then are further divided into higher, medium and lower qualities and in this way you arrive at 108 tastes. In addition to that, it has just as many types of proteins and nutrients. *Ro gyei* is hundred tastes and *chü dhen* means having nutritional value. The main purpose of food is to sustain our body and build strength. As an offering this is not for yourself, but to the object to whom you offer. However, it was not recommended to just go for quantity

<sup>298</sup> See note 314 on pg.157.

<sup>299</sup> Also called *nyunde*.

<sup>300</sup> Ref. Vasubandhu, *Pancaskandhaka-prakarana*, in Stefan Anacker, *Seven Works of Vasubandhu*, p. 65.

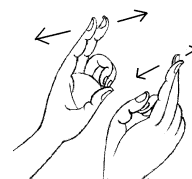
and substance, it should taste good as well. The text says *nourishing delicacies of a hundred flavors*. So it must have good taste. You don't want buckwheat mixed up with all sorts of other things. Again, though you have to get the balancing point of protein and carbohydrates and vitamins, the taste is very important. There are certain things which might be very nourishing, but they might not be edible. The same goes for drinks. *Za chay tung wa* is in this translation food. *Za wa* is actually rice and all the other grains and cereals, and also meat, *cha wa* refers to all the roots like potatoes, beets, carrots, radishes, and yams, and also sugar cane, leaves, flowers, and all fruit, and so forth. *Tung wa* is yogurt, milk, and other dairy products.

This offering is summarized then by calling it 'all the delicacies of gods and men', indicating that you imagine as much as possible. It is the normal exaggerated or rather, intensified statement. In short, the food offering you are making has to be the best of the best and available not only in the human land, but also in the god realms. It should also not be just a small quantity, but a huge amount, bigger than Mt. Meru. *They are massed in mountains of divine and human food.*

#### *Offering of Music, shabda*

*na tsoh röl mö je drak tha yay lay*  
*jung way dhang nyan gyur we sa sum geng*

- st. 23. **Musical instruments of every variety**  
**Play sweet melodies that pervade three realms.**



There are different varieties in the offering of music. Horns and trumpets are wind instruments, others you beat, and others like guitars you strum. The purpose of the music is to produce very attractive, soothing, beautiful sounds by using different instruments, notes, and tunes. Hearing these sounds relieves mental, physical, and emotional sufferings. That is the quality of music. Such music is offered to the Supreme Field of Merit, the objects of refuge, yourself, to your friends and colleagues and all the other sentient beings for the purpose of relieving their physical, mental, and emotional sufferings. (This description is from the detailed *Lama Chöpa*, which I have memorized.) The sounds fill up the three different areas: on the ground and above and below it. At this point in the offering you play bell and damaru.

The mudra for the music is playing the damaru.

The music does not have to be traditional music of beating a drum or playing cymbals. Any kind of beautiful music can be offered here. Traditionally, the instruments are flute, then various kinds of drums, like the *mirtanga* and the bigger drum. Now we have a great variety of beautiful instruments available, such as the piano, the guitar, violin and many more. So, you don't have to stick to only the traditional ones. As long as it does not produce a horrible sound individually or collectively, because that would not be considered a musical offering. Of course, singing is also a musical offering. I am not sure about hard rock, but as long as it doesn't have an angry beat, as long as it gives pleasure or joy, it is music suitable to be offered. Music is supposed to produce joy. We know that. We like it, because it brings joy. Why do we pay money for concert tickets? Because it brings us pleasure. Here we offer music, because it brings joy to the objects of refuge. You offer countless harmonies, melodies and rhythms. This joy is also not an ordinary joy, but extraordinary joy that brings wisdom and compassion together, the blissful joy which recognizes emptiness.

*Vajra, bell, damaru.* The traditional instruments we always use are the bell and the damaru. These, according to the tradition of Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche and Kyabje Ling Rinpoche should be played very majestically, not too fast. These days many are playing the damaru too fast.

When you ring the bell it does not just mean ding ding ding, but you have to think about the meaning of that verse. You also have to ring the bell at your heart level. The bell should also ring regularly. The clapper also has to hit the two sides of the inside of the bell equally and produce the best sound available.

The vajra represents compassion, method, bodhimind, the Bodhisattva's mind. Vajra and bell should not be separate. The bell represents wisdom. The sound itself represents emptiness.

*Si pa ngo wo nyi nyi gye tang / Ngo wo nyi gyi si tai je*  
*Rang zhin tak pai sem den te / Si pa tak pa che pa gyur*

The essence of samsara is empty.  
 Knowing that nature of emptiness makes you free from samsara.  
 The mind that is pure will liberate you from samsara

The sound of the damaru hits you within your body and arouses the tummo, the heat that melts the white drop of bodhicitta, which is stored somewhere in your brain, and brings it down. Talking about joy, this drop is brought down from the center of the brain to the most sensitive area of your body. It is not simply extracting a few drops from your kidney area and going batz batz batz!

In the Kagyu tradition they play the damaru slightly differently. While playing it they move it up and down and up and down. They have their own reasons. Actually it is the same reason. In the Drikung Kagyu tradition, before the chanting master starts he will play the small damaru first way up and then while playing it slowly, move it down. It means the same thing. The tummo is rising, hits at the center of the brain, makes the drop drip down and so on. In our tradition, we play the damaru at the level where the tummo is, which is at the navel. But you have to hold it up, so it does not look like a Chinese Pekinese dog flopping its ears around.

## Five Sense Offerings

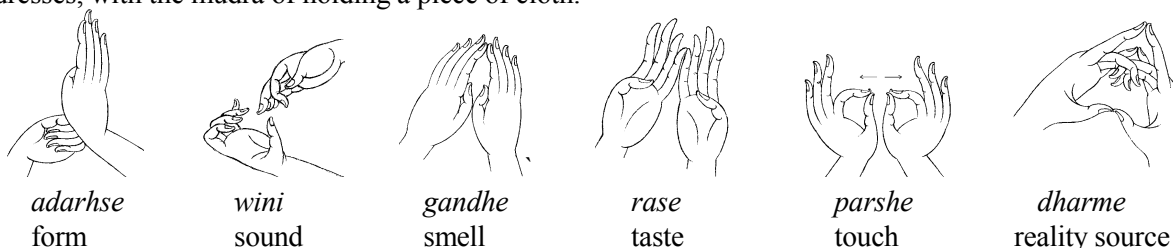
*Zuk dra dri ro rek jay pel dzin pay*  
*chi nang dö yön lha mo choh kün kyap*

st. 24. **Goddesses of inner and outer delights**  
**Bring objects of sight, sound, scent, taste and touch.**

The five senses are form, sound, smell, taste, and touch.

*Five Outer Sense Offerings.*<sup>301</sup> You generate an offering deity from your heart and offer the best form available. It has to be a very beautiful form, *adarshē*. Actually, in your visualization, you visualize a deity carrying a double-sided mirror in her hand, that gives you the reflection. There are lots of reasons for that. Remember, during the Yamantaka teaching I went through the invocation of Yamantaka. It says there that the nature of Yamantaka is the nature of all phenomena. As example we had the reflection of the moon in the water with all the different surfaces of water displaying the moon simultaneously. This example is also famous in Zen. So there are many reasons why the goddess of form carries a mirror. The best form is actually the form of emptiness.

When you offer sound, *wini*, different goddesses or also gods, Dakas and Dakinis, carry different musical instruments. Here again, you ring the bell and damaru, but if you are not doing that you can make the appropriate mudra. Then, when you offer smell, *gandhe*, the goddesses will carry different perfumes. If you don't like that, let them carry saffron water. Then you offer taste, *rāse*. Here the offering deities offer food of the hundred different tastes. The goddesses of touch, *Parshe*, offer various clothes and dresses, with the mudra of holding a piece of cloth.



*Five Inner Sense Offerings.*<sup>302</sup> By making the offering of form to the eye-consciousness, the goddess of form causes the eye consciousness to experience uncontaminated bliss and void. This comes not only through seeing the offering goddess, but this goddess that we have manifested now dissolves to the specific deity that we had placed there before. Remember we had deities put at each of the senses together

<sup>301</sup> Also see Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 132-133.

<sup>302</sup> Also see Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 133-137.

with their consorts.<sup>303</sup> So now the form goddess, *Zuk Dorjema* (Skt. Rupavajra) dissolves to Rupavajra, the consort of Ksitigarbha, who goes into union with Ksitigarbha, and that union produces bliss-void.

Similarly, the offering deity of sound dissolves to Shabdavajra, the consort of Vajrapani, who goes into union with him awakening the inner sound. The goddess of smell joins Gandhavajra, the consort of Akashagarbha, the deity at the nose. She emits tremendously strong perfume from her mouth and body and goes into union with the male deity. The taste goddess joins Rasavajra, the consort of Avalokiteshvara, and they enter union. The taste goddess activates the inner taste, a very juicy one. Then the goddess of touch merges with Parshavajra, the consort of *Tibsil* (Skt. Sarvanivarana-viskambini). This brings tremendous amounts of sensation to the body in general and particularly at the right spots.

Remember, when we did the body mandala, we set up the deities and consorts with each other, but just let them watch each other and see what is happening. Now the time for watching is over. Actually this process is happening for each deity of the guru tree and if you can manage you can visualize it for all of them, but the focus is on the principal and the deities put on his body. So now the consorts are joining the deities.

We should call this offering the ‘five-sense offering’ or even better, ‘sensual offering’, because there is sexuality involved. If we don’t call it that, there won’t be any sexuality left. In total, this brings tremendous joy of body and mind to all objects of refuge.

*Bliss-void Offering.* If you are a completion-stage practitioner, here you have the bliss-void offering. This bliss-void offering is slightly different from usual. You yourself are in the form of the Yidam, male or female, with consort. From the point of union, you bring up from the tip of the sex-organ the red egg, out of which a red flower is generated. This rises and moves throughout the body. The movement back and forward of the red flower within the circulation of the union of the consort and yourself, the joining point being the sex-organs, not forehead or mouth, brings special joy. In the case of the male, it is said, because of that movement of the red flower, the *tummo*, the psychic heat, rises and the air moves and brings the white bodhicitta down from the crown. That very bodhicitta coming down hits on the *tummo* like oil on a burning stove, it burns more strongly, and that is how it brings up the joy. Such a joy is not only felt and experienced at the lower part of the body, but completely fills all parts of the body, fills you up completely to the crown, also your head is completely filled up, you’re completely filled up by the joy. You experience and offer that joy.

Thus we have covered the outer and inner sense offering. You have to think that these goddesses of inner and outer delights are everywhere, there is not just one goddess of form and one of sound, coming one after another. You don’t just have five goddesses, but they are everywhere. Also, when you think of a mandala house, you have so many offering deities outside the window, inside the wall and so on.

Audience: If we make offerings of the sense objects, what happens to renunciation? When Atisha left the royal palace to become a practitioner he said that he had no attachment to the kingdom and that for him there was no difference between a palace and a prison and between a princess and the evil one’s daughter. So such a person does not really enjoy those sense objects. How could he decide that these things are good things to be offered?

Rinpoche: Atisha was held back by his parents. They were trying to stop him from becoming a monk. Finally one of his gurus sent him and five other crazy-looking guys out on the streets, doing all kinds of funny things, behaving completely like mad persons. I see no contradiction here. I also don’t think that this proves his renunciation, rather he used that as a method to get free from the clutches of his parents. His renunciation incidentally consists of non-attachment, not non-appreciation. There is a big difference between attachment and appreciation. I also don’t think that at that moment Atisha was talking from the viewpoint of emptiness. He was just expressing to his mother that whether she gave him soft, silken clothes to wear or gave him a lashing to make him feel pain, it was no difference to him. He said to her that whether she gave him a wonderful princess or a universal ruler or just a female mad dog in the street, it would not make any difference for him. There are two ways of looking at that. One would be the Mahasiddha style of behavior, the other that he is simply trying to get away from his parents.

Audience: When we are trying to develop renunciation, aren’t we meant to see that there is no difference between what we commonly perceive as pleasant objects and the unpleasant?

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<sup>303</sup> See page 108.



Rinpoche: I don't think we are capable of doing that. I also would like to emphasize that I don't use the word 'renunciation' at all. I use instead *Seeking Freedom*. Even the First Principle of the Path I avoid calling 'renunciation'. The use of the language sometimes makes different imprints in people's minds. And the meaning of it really is seeking freedom. As I said at the moment we don't have the capability and the freedom to understand that there is no difference between pleasant and unpleasant objects. I don't recommend to use it in that way. This is for highly developed people. To some of them there is actually not so much difference between objects to be used and objects that should be thrown away.

Audience: During the discussion on verse 18 you mentioned that a particular tantra says '*you are the creator of all, I bow to you.*' Can you explain what you mean by the word creator in the context of the guru-yidam?

Rinpoche: I am looking at the mandala. Who has created the mandala? The principal yidam of the mandala itself. When we become fully enlightened we will be the principal deity of our own, self-created mandala. Even beyond that, I see myself as my own creator. I know that is not easy to say with the Judeo-Christian culture in mind and in particular in front of present and former Catholics. But I do create my own suffering and my own joy. Even my body, my pleasures, *etc.*, are my own creation. What I see is that I create my own universe, you create yours and we interchange together. When I go, I unplug my universe zoop, and it goes out. It is gone. That is how I view life. Each and everyone of us brings their own little tent and puts it up. Then we are all sitting there and interact. We will adopt all of you in there and you will adopt all of us in there. That is how we interact. You don't have to buy what I just said. This is not an official Buddhist teaching, it is my viewpoint. The Buddhist teaching actually has something like that. It is called *khyap dhah*, the *pervasive lord*. That is Tibetan Buddhist Vajrayana reference. That comes really from that idea and in that sense it is a Buddhist idea. But if you have a valid reason you can reject that idea.

Audience: Your explanation of the mandala is very practical. As we go further into Vajrayana and adjust our perception away from ordinary perception and conception towards extraordinary perception and conception, does the quality of each of our mandalas shift accordingly?

Rinpoche: Obviously, it has got to do that. That is why in Vajrayana the ordinary perception and perception are almost treated as neuroses.

Audience: Hopefully, my questions will be answerable with yes or no. Coming back to the impermanence within the permanent, there is a physicist, Joseph Barber, who says that time does not exist in the ways we think. He also says that it is permanent. He explains that time is like a reel of movie film made up of frames. Each frame is permanent. When you show the movie, it seems like it is changing and that it is actually ultimately permanent. Is that what you were talking about?

Rinpoche: The answer is 'no'. The movie reel going on does not ever become permanent.

Audience: But each frame is permanent.

Rinpoche: But the things you are showing are changing.

Audience: You said before you don't accept a universal consciousness. What about Ram Dass's Number Three [referring to a work shop with Ram Dass where he outlines three different levels of 'I']?

Rinpoche: When you do a work shop with somebody you don't go and contradict the person. We were talking about the term 'ego' and he, although being a trained psychologist, agreed that it was a terrible word. He started calling it " 'I' number one, two and three". At that time I viewed the Number Three 'I' as total enlightenment. Number One would be the ego-oriented subject or object of negation. The Number Two would be the real functioning self.

Audience: Is one of them the 'atman'?

Rinpoche: No, that is different again. That comes from the Hindu philosophy. This is the difference between Nagarjuna and Shankaracharya. Nagarjuna does not accept the atman. That is where emptiness comes in. Ram Dass might have been thinking that the Number Three self is the atman. But I took it to mean the enlightened level and I kind of left it there. Actually, when we had the same subject in Omega in New York, both Sharon Salzberg and Joan Halifax disagreed with Ram Dass. He was surprised, wondering how come they didn't agree but I agreed. If you accept that third type of self as permanent you ac-

tually do get a problem. So Ram Dass asked me, ‘if that is not permanent, then what is it?’ I said, ‘Continuity of discontinuity’, to which Ram Dass said, ‘I have no problem with that.’ So we settled it this way.

### **Mandala Offerings**<sup>304</sup>

There is:

1. Outer Mandala Offering, (37 heaps mandala offering and 23 heaps mandala offering)].
2. Inner Mandala Offering.
3. Practice Mandala Offering.

The mandala offering is an extremely important practice, a key-practice for the accumulation of merit and purification. It will also produce the karma which you need to have for your own pure land. Here you are building a total universe with Mt. Meru, the continents and the best possible things. Pure land is the non-tantric, sutra language. In Vajrayana, we call it mandala.

*Mandala base and material.* If possible you should have an actual mandala base and rings. Actually, mandala means center. Whether it is the mandala of the universe or whatever it might be, for practitioners it is good and very important to have a mandala base that you can use to perform the offering. Use it occasionally.

It is important to have good quality for the offerings. A lot of people in Tibet carried a mandala of 24-karat gold. Especially during Kyabje Trijang and Kyabje Ling Rinpoche’s teaching, when you looked around, everyone in front would have a solid gold mandala. Those who could not afford that, would have gilded silver or pure silver. With those of one hundred percent silver, you have to be very careful not to squeeze it. The people who cannot afford that would then use copper and brass and then different alloys. Even wood will do. I don’t recommend gilded ones, because if you rub it, it wears off. Often in India three, four, or five precious metals are mixed together; seven is best, with gold, of course, silver, copper, brass, *etc.* Very few people would have this mixture of metals, or copper alone. Normally, in Tibet, both the rich and poor (the American poor would be rich in Tibet, remember that), if at all possible would use pure silver, sterling silver.

The rings of the mandala would be made with knitted jewels. People still tried to have the top of the mandala, Indra’s palace, made out of gold or silver. Traditionally it was like that. When we came to India and couldn’t afford that, we had these huge blocks of melted brass and zink. And, when Tsongkhapa worked and made mandala offerings, I believe he didn’t have a silver or even a copper base. He used a flat stone outside. Using the expensive materials for the mandala offering is one of the best way to accumulate merit as well as for purification. That is why the ritual objects are always of good quality.

The recommended size of the base is not smaller than your own food bowl. In any case, the universe should not become smaller and your mandala should not get bigger, but it sort of fits in anyway. It is like the story of Milarepa sitting in a yak horn during a hail storm. The yak horn did not get bigger and Milarepa did not get any smaller, but he was in there singing.<sup>305</sup> It is mission impossible, but actually it is possible, because it is a mental activity. So it is no big deal.

The material you put on the mandala to make the heaps should be pieces of jewels and different grains. If you try to use precious stones alone, which I did last year foolishly, it becomes extremely heavy so that you can’t even lift it. Whatever stones people have given me, you find in my mandala offering. Most of them are imitation stones, some are real, all go in it. It is also very good to use Indian corn, the small kernels, and mix that with different jewels, precious and semi-precious stones. That mixture will be lighter, though you may need other grains as well. You can use rice; in Tibet we use barley. Whether rice or barley, in old Tibet we tried to color it yellow. **You put some saffron in a little bit of warm milk, soak the grain in it, and then dry and clean it. To color barley with saffron is difficult and also in old Tibet saffron was very expensive. So Gomo showed me to use milk with some tamari, heat it without boiling, soak the rice in there and then dry it completely. It is recommended not to use chemicals in order to dye the grain.** The reason why you soak the grain is to symbolize that you mind is soaked in

<sup>304</sup> Literature: Geshe Lobsang Tharchin, *A Commentary on Guru-Yoga and Offering the Mandala*, p. 63-83, Geshe Namgyal Wangchen, *Awakening the Mind of Enlightenment*, p. 62-68. Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in Our Hands*, vol. I, p. 196-201. Lama Zopa Rinpoche, (about) *Mandala Offering* (title unknown)

<sup>305</sup> Garma C.C. Chang, *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*, p. 421-441.

compassion. You also wash the jewels of the mandala with that. Although they don't get soaked, they get cleaned. That helps the individual to develop great compassion and bodhimind.

Then when you recite the mandala offering, do it either in Sanskrit, English or Tibetan, you don't have to do them all. I have seen some translations with all three languages, that is absolutely unnecessary to use in practice. One of them will do. But if you are saying it, you have to say it nicely; there are methods for shortening it if necessary.

Incidentally, as for the 37 heap-mandala, the 37 does not correspond to the 37 wings of enlightenment. When the Loseling monks came to perform in Ann Arbor, somebody gave a long lecture in which he kept on linking the 37 heaps of the mandala with the 37 wings of enlightenment, but that is not the case.

### Outer Mandala Offering

The outer mandala is the mandala that you usually say before the teachings or during the practice. There are a number of different ways of doing it; here we have the thirty-seven heaps.

In your practice, when you use the mandala base and rings, you hold the base with your left hand, which is not empty, but holds a few of the grains or jewels you are using. Rub the base with the flesh of your right forearm, not with the shirt or anything, but with your own flesh. Three times circle out, visualizing that you are purifying all your negativities. Then three times in, collecting the body, mind, and speech blessings and the siddhihood of the enlightened beings. You can repeat that three by three, or do only one times three. Then you pour the grain or precious stones on the base.

#### *Thirty-seven heaps mandala offering*

*Om vajra bhumi ah hum*  
*wang chen ser gyi sa zhi*  
*Om vajra rekhe ah hum*  
*chi chak ri kor yuk yi kor we*  
*u sur i gyel po ri rap*

*shar lu pak po*  
*lho dzam bu ling*  
*nub ba lang chö*  
*chan dra mi nyen*  
*lū dan lū pak*  
*ngay yap dang ngay yap zhen*  
*yo den dang lam chok dro*  
*dra mi nyen dang dra mi nyen gyi da*  
*rin po che ri wo*  
*pak sam gyi shing*  
*do jö wa*  
*ma mo pa yi lo tok*  
*kor lo rin po che*  
*nor bu rin po che*  
*tsün mo rin po che*  
*lon po rin po che*  
*lang po rin po che*  
*ta chok rin po che*  
*mak pon rin po che*

OM VAJRA BHUMI AH HUM  
great and powerful golden ground  
OM VAJRA REKHE AH HUM.  
At the edge the iron fence stands around the outer circle.  
In the center mount Meru, the king of mountains, (1)<sup>307</sup>  
around which are the four continents:<sup>308</sup>  
in the east Purvavideha; (2)  
in the south Jambudvipa; (3)  
in the west Aparagodaniya; (4)  
in the north Uttarakuru (5)  
Each has two sub-continents<sup>309</sup>: Deha and Videha; (6-7)  
Tsamara and Abatsamara, (8-9)  
Satha and Uttaramantrina, (10-11)  
Kurava and Kaurava. (12-13)  
The mountain of jewels, (14)  
the wish-granting tree, (15)  
the wish-granting cow, (16)  
and the harvest unsown. (17)  
The precious wheel, (18)  
the precious jewel, (19)  
the precious queen, (20)  
the precious minister, (21)  
the precious elephant, (22)  
the precious supreme horse, (23)  
the precious general, (24)

<sup>307</sup> The numbers refer to the placing of the heaps, see the figure of the mandala offering on p. 156.

<sup>308</sup> Purvavideha: Superior Body; Jambudipa: Island of Jambu fruit; Aparagodanya: Cattle enjoyments; Uttarakuru: Unpleasant Sound.

<sup>309</sup> Deha and Videha: Body and Superior Body; Tsamara and Abatsamara: Waving-Tails and Other Waving-Tails; Satha and Uttaramantrina: Moving and Traveling the Supreme Path; Kurava and Kaurava: Unpleasant Sound & Moon of Unpleasant Sound.

ter chen po bum pa  
 gek mo ma  
 tran wa ma  
 lu ma  
 gar ma  
 me tok ma  
 duk po ma  
 nang sel ma  
 dri chap ma  
 nyi ma dha wa  
 rin po che duk  
 chok le nam par gyel wei gyel tsen  
 u su lha dang mi  
 pel jor pün sum tsok pa  
 ma tsang wa me pa

tsang zhing yi du ong wa  
 di dak drin chen tsa wa dang gyu par  
 che pe pelden lama<sup>306</sup>  
 dampa nam dang key par du yang  
 lama lo sang tub wang dor je chang  
 chen po lha tsog khor dang che pa nam  
 la bul war gyio.  
 tuk je dro wei dön du zhe su söl  
 zhe ne chin gyi lap tu söl

and the great treasure vase. (25)  
 The goddess of beauty, (26)  
 the goddess of garlands, (27)  
 the goddess of song, (28)  
 the goddess of dance, (29)  
 the goddess of flowers, (30)  
 the goddess of incense, (31)  
 the goddess of light, (32)  
 the goddess of scent. (33)  
 The sun and the moon (34-35),  
 the precious umbrella, (36)  
 the banner of victory in every direction. (37)  
 In the center  
 all treasures of gods and men,  
 an excellent collection with nothing left out.

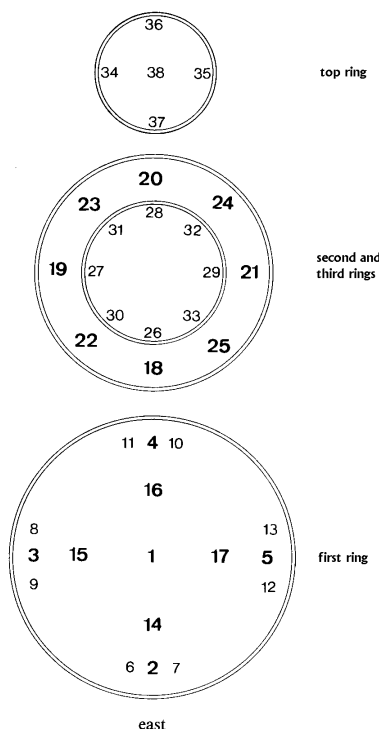
I offer this  
 to you my kind root Guru, and lineage Gurus,  
 to all of you sacred and glorious Gurus;  
 and especially to you,  
 great Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang,  
 together with your retinues.

Please accept with compassion for migrating beings and  
 (having accepted, out of your great compassion,)  
 please bestow your blessings  
 (on all sentient beings pervading space.)

*Wang chen ser gyi sa zhi* is the golden ground. *Chi chak ri kor yuk gi kor we* is the fence.

Now you put the first ring on the base. If you don't have that, you drop a little of whatever material you have around the edge to make a fence. *U su ri gyel po ri rap*, at the center the mount Everest (Mount Meru); you put one little heap symbolizing Mount Meru.

Now the four continents in the four cardinal directions. You start from the east, but where the east is depends on your purpose in offering the mandala. If the purpose is to offer to someone, then the east is in front far away from you.<sup>310</sup> If the purpose is to collect blessings, the east is in front near to you.<sup>311</sup> You know, it is impermanent, it is empty, you can turn it around, make the east west, make the west east, there is no problem.



mandala 37 heaps

*Shar lu pak po*, at the east. *Lho dzam bu ling*, Jampudvipa at the south, *Nup ba lang chö* the west, *Chan dra mi nyen*, the north. After that, the intermediate directions with the sub-continents: *Lü dang lü pak*, the two sub-continents of the east; you go from southeast to northeast. *Ngay yap dang ngay yap zhen*, the sub-continents for the southern continent; you go from southwest to southeast. *Yo den dang lam chok dro*, the two sub-continents of the western continent, you go from northwest to southwest. *Dra mi nyen dang dra mi nyen gyi da*, the two sub-continents for the north, you go from northeast to northwest. With the sub-continents, you go forward and backward, forward and backward, in a hopping motion.

ie mandala offering changes according to the teachings or the ritual done. For mandala *tu yang je tsun Ngawang Gehlek Trinley Namgyal pal zang po sung cho zhab mo zhu* (ore teaching) – *thop pai yon du zing kham bhul wa zhu* (after teaching) Then continue *ie ne chin gyi lap tu söl* it a teaching or an initiation, to thank for a teaching or initiation. Dismanteling at the end goes o if the mandala is offered to dispel obstacles and obstructions. the merit field, the dismanteling is also towards yourself.

Then you have *rin po che ri wo*, the precious mountain which is the most important thing in the eastern continent. Then you have *pak sam gyi shing*, wish-granting trees, which is the most important thing in the southern continent, then *do jö wa*, the wish-fulfilling cow which is the most important thing in the western continent. No wonder, why Europeans have a lot of cheese! Then *ma mo pa yi lo tok*, the crops that need no cultivation; that is the most important thing in the north.

[Then place the second ring and] it goes round<sup>312</sup> with *kor lo rin po che, nor bu rin po che, etc*<sup>313</sup>. up to *nyi ma dha wa*.

[Place the third ring]. *Nyima* is sun; *dhawa* is moon. The sun and moon should be east and west, but we put them the other way round, south and north. The reason is that you want to put the victory-banner closest to the object to whom you make the offering. *Rin po che duk* is the precious umbrella.

*Chok le nam par gyel wei gyel tsen*. The victory banner and the general banner are precious banners, precious not just because they are showpieces, but because of their qualities. Even the material it is made of should be expensive. In good old Tibet they used to hang very expensive ones. What we put up here is the cheap stuff. Many of them, I believe, got some kind of white Russian brocade, that was made way before the Russian revolution. When my geshe exams came (at that time Sonam's uncle was my manager), we made the geshe offerings and we offered either the umbrella or a banner, I don't remember which, to Loseling. I think we had all offering banners completely new-made for Nyare Khamsen, but for Loseling either a banner or umbrella was made. I was told it was one of the most expensive things during that offering. It was 1957 or 1958, and the expenses those days were almost equivalent to 160 or 170 thousand US dollars in 1958. So it was a lot of money. We gave real Chinese silver-coins, one to each monk, and that itself was \$15,000, plus there were all the additional expenses, somebody gets two, someone gets four, or five, thirty, forty, all these systems were there.

This is just to give you a little idea of how the offering banners are precious materially. Spiritually it is precious because it grows out of bliss-void, and its purpose is to bring bliss-void; you like it, it is beautiful, you enjoy it, admire it, people will come and admire it, you will be happy and that happiness pushes brings the bliss and void. That is why in the monasteries in Tibet things are extremely expensive. Every single little thing is very expensive because everybody puts efforts to make something wonderful.

[Place the mandala top]. *U su lha dang mi* and so on, 'all treasures of gods and men...', is about all the best magical things in the world. One example is the precious shoe, said to have been created by the great fortune of the chakravartin rajas. If you put on such a shoe you can walk over any river, no matter how deep or shallow it is. But, when you put on the shoe, you have to move, you can't sit still, it makes you go. Go where? Go to enlightenment as fast as you can; that is the purpose, that is why the shoe was put there. The shoe is not mentioned in this mandala offering, it is covered under the *etcetera* business, 'the best available among gods and humans'. There are a lot of those, like the eight lucky signs, the banners, the queen, the king, the minister, the elephant, the horse, every one of them has been covered.<sup>314</sup> So, anything you like, anything most wonderful, is there.

Now at least you got an idea. If you have enough rice and substances you go up to three layers of the mandala. If you don't, one or two layers will do. If it is too difficult, you can even go in a circle, it does not matter, there is nothing wrong with that. The mandala has been taught in that way; however, a lot of people just throw some rice and rub three times, throw some rice and rub three times, that is what they usually do anyway. I tried to show you how the proper order works.

At the end when you close the mandala, when you dismantle it, you collect all the substances into your cloth. If you do the mandala as an offering to somebody, at the end you pour all the substances away from you. If you do it to accumulate merit and blessings, you pour it towards yourself.

<sup>312</sup> Going round in the second ring can be done in two ways: a) east, south-east, south, south-west etc. b) one round the main directions, next round the subdirections; the last one is shown in the diagram.

<sup>313</sup> The seven royal attributes of a Universal Monarch, *chakravartin raja*, plus the treasure vase. In the Hindu-Buddhist mythology a king (raja) that rules the universe by means of a wheel (chakra).

<sup>314</sup> Literature on the eight lucky signs and other symbols: Daggyab Rinpoche, *Buddhist Symbols in Tibetan Culture*.

*Sakya Pakpa*.<sup>315</sup> What we have been explaining now is the thirty-seven heap mandala, made by a Sakya lama. The twenty-three heap mandala was made by Dongden Chögyal Pakpa, the earlier Sakya Lama who went to China and became the root guru of the emperor of China.

The funny thing is, they did not invite Pakpa, they invited Pakpa's uncle, one of the Sakya lamas. The emperor decided to observe him for twelve years, to see if he was fit to be his guru. After that he said, "You have observed me for twelve years, now I have to observe you for twelve years." But in the meantime, he died, so there was no observation. His nephew whom he brought with him, Pakpa, became the guru. He is very famous and well known in Tibetan history. After that time everyone wanted to become the guru of the emperors. Pakpa gave the first initiation to that emperor. To thank him for the initiation, the emperor gave him all Tibet, thirteen 'provinces' of ten thousand families. Earlier, Tibet had been united and powerful, then it became completely divided, no ruler, nothing. Tibet was unified again under this Sakya family, who became the first Tibetan rulers, because of that initiation. So Pakpa is important in history, in the thirteenth century.

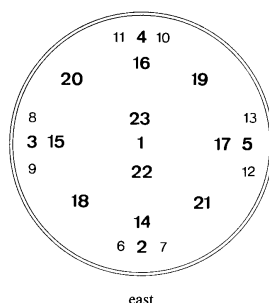
Among the Sakya and among the Gelug, the thirty-seven-heap mandala is popular today, but Tsongkhapa did the twenty-three heap one. Why twenty-three? One reason is that it is Naropa's way of doing it.

### *Twenty-Three Heaps Mandala Offering*

*Je wa trak gya ling zhi lhün por chay  
rin chen dhun dang nye way rin chen soh  
kün ga kye pay nö chü phün sum tsoh  
lha mi long cho dho gü ter chen po  
dhang way sem kyi phül jung zhing gi choh  
kyap gön thuh jei ter la ul war gyi*

st. 25. **Refuge protector, treasure of compassion,  
Perfect field for growing good fortune,  
With a mind of devotion I offer to you  
The mountain and four continents a million times over,  
All precious royal emblems and possessions,  
Perfectly delightful environments and beings  
And a grand treasury of divine and human enjoyments.  
(IDAM GURU RATNA MANDALAKAM NIRYATAYAMI)**

This mandala of the twenty-three heaps was recommended for this particular Lama Chöpa practice, but, it does not really matter, whether twenty-three or thirty-seven heaps. When Je Rinpoche practiced, he used the twenty-three heap mandala. In this verse all twenty-three heaps of the mandala in Tsongkhapa's style are mentioned:



*mandala 23 heaps*

*Ling zhi* are the four continents and by mentioning these it is understood that there are also the eight subcontinents, two each at the right and left sides of the four continents. So now we have twelve heaps. *Lhün por che* is Mount Meru. That makes thirteen. Then the text mentions the *rin chen dhun*, the seven precious objects, which are: the elephant [in east], the minister [in the south], the horse in the west, the queen in the north, the general in the south east, the wheel in the south west, the jewel in the north west.<sup>316</sup> That makes twenty, to which you add up the treasure-vase in the north east and the sun in the east and the moon in the west and you have twenty-three. So, if you make the twenty-three heaps offering, that is how to do it.<sup>317</sup>

The *nye way rin chen*, the semi-precious things are also mentioned here.

<sup>315</sup> Thirteenth century Sakya master who became imperial preceptor under Qubilai Khan. Also known as Chögyal Pakpa. Ref. Glenn H. Mullin, *The Fourteen Dalai Lama's*, p. 43-47.

<sup>316</sup> Symbolism of the seven major and minor royal possessions: L.S. Dagab Rinpoche, *Buddhist Symbols in Tibetan Culture*; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 139-141;

<sup>317</sup> This 23-heap mandala is described in: Tsongkhapa's *A Book of Three Inspirations*, to be found in: Glenn H. Mullin, *Tsongkhapa's Six Yogas of Naropa*, p. 235-236.

They are: a wonderful garden, a beautiful house, a good bed or blanket, wonderful clothes, the shoes, the big sword, the naga skin. (As there are no nagas here, you may use plastic ones, I believe.) I don't know why a good environment is less precious than gold, but that is how they count. Our text says, *All precious royal emblems and possessions*.

There are always alternate ways of counting the twenty-three heaps. You can use the seven precious things or the seven semi-precious things, *etc.* Then in addition to that you can have the eight auspicious signs and the eight auspicious substances: yoghurt, sesame seeds, durva grass, mustard seeds, conch shell, mirror, elephant gall stones, then red mud.<sup>318</sup> You don't have to visualize all of them. You just think that they are all there. It would be too difficult to count them every time. Even for me it is. I have been counting them for sixty years and I don't remember all of them now. So I don't expect you to remember everything. The shortest way to offer everything is according to the Long Six-session yoga where it says,

Whether it is owned by anybody else or not,  
actually exhibited or mentally created, whatever is beautiful, I offer to you.

This verse says, *I offer to you perfectly delightful environments and beings*. So whatever you offer, environments and inhabitants, are pure and perfectly delightful.

In the text, it says one offers a billion universes. There is a way of counting to come to that amount. When they count the four continents and so on, they also include [Mount Meru], the gold mountain. The description of the universe in this way comes from the Hindu-Buddhist mythology. I don't know whether there is such a thing as Mt. Meru or not, but it is used as the point of reference, surrounded by these continents. Normally, it is said that we humans are all part of the Southern Continent. But according to Vasubandhu's metaphysical text it is explained that between the southern and northern continent there is a twelve-hour time difference – from midday to midnight. This corresponds to the difference between Beijing time and New York time, provided there is no day-light saving. In this case in the United States we would be in the Northern Continent which has the crops that don't need cultivating. Maybe that is talking about the corn! The most precious thing in the western continent is the wish fulfilling cow. That is why the Europeans have so much cheese – provided there is no mad cow disease! The Southern Continent in that case could be just the Indian subcontinent.

This also includes all six realms, from the lowest hell to the highest peak of samsara. I have a chart produced by Thai monks, similar to the one that Steve K. has produced a while ago but they have many more levels and sublevels than ours.

All of these together are counted as one universe. That is multiplied by 1000 which is then called *tong chi to*. That is multiplied a 1000 times which is called the second 1000. When each of these is multiplied by 1000 it is called one great 1000 and this multiplied by 100 becomes 1 trillion. This is what *je wa trak gyei* means. So it has to be more than 1 billion. Our translation says *A million times over*. In any case it is a very, very big multiplication. And according to that metaphysical text all these 1 trillion universes have one big base that is an air mandala. This they then count another 1000 times and multiply that by another 1000 and that again multiplied by 1000 is supposed to be the rough estimate of the existing universes, traditionally. I never paid much attention to that in detail, because it is way beyond my imagination. Who really cares how many universes are around! A 'close encounter with a third one' is enough for us right now.

Whether you offer the thirty-seven heap mandala or the twenty-three heap mandala, though you use the metal offering things in your hands, in your visualization everything is put on the lotus-ground. You manifest the lotus-ground from your bliss-void-nature and put all the elements mentioned on top of that. Out of bliss-void nature you can generate a beautiful offering-tree, a wonderful jewel-tree, which has twenty-five branches.<sup>319</sup> On top of each one of those branches you have the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra standing, radiating nice light from the navel. On top of that light another tree is formed, a duplicate of the first, another twenty-five branched jewel offering-tree. On each one of its branches stands another

<sup>318</sup> Literature: L.S. Dagab Rinpoche, *Buddhist Symbols in Tibetan Culture*.

<sup>319</sup> Also see Geshe Namgyal Wangchen, *Awakening the Mind of Enlightenment*, p. 68.

Samantabhadra, from whose navel another twenty-five branched tree is generated. Again that tree is multiplied twenty-five times, *etcetera*. That is how the mandala is multiplied. That is what you visualize.

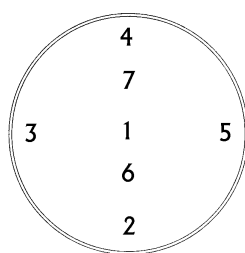
You may be throwing rice and this and that, but what you *really* do is this. Ultimately, all the earth and space, any empty place wherever, is completely filled up by your manifested Samantabhadra-offerings. In your visualization you offer this multi-galaxy of universes full of offerings to Lama Buddha Vajradhara. You do that to accumulate big merit. The merit also comes from abundance, not from miserliness, so everything has to be big and nice.

The offering is so attractive that it brings joy to anybody who sees it, hears about it, smells it; that is the *kün ga kye pay*. *Nö* stands for environment, *chü* stands for inhabitants. When you offer the total universe, there are a lot of people in there and they are all pure. That is the mandala offering.

### *Seven-heap mandala offering*

*sa zhi po kyi jug shing me tok tram  
ri rab ling zhi nyi de gyen pa di  
Sang gye zhing du mig te ul wa yi  
dro kun nam dag zhing la cho par shok*

By directing to the Fields of Buddhas  
this offering of a mandala,  
built on a base, resplendent with flowers,  
saffron water and incense,  
adorned with Mount Meru, and the Four Continents,  
as well as with the Sun and the Moon,  
may all sentient beings be led to these Fields.



*mandala 7 heaps*

You don't need to say the *Sa zhi po kyi* verse here, because the verse *Je wa trak* serves the purpose.<sup>320</sup> If you do want to say it, you can say it either before or after the verse *Jewa trak*. Also this thirty-seven or even the twenty-three heap mandala is not compulsory. You can even just say the *Sa zhi po kyi* alone. It is very flexible.<sup>321</sup>

One thing you have to learn is that, in Tibetan Buddhism, a certain order is necessary, yet it is very flexible within that. You find that in your own practice. Also, we say that this is very important and that is important, so first it looks very rigid and strict, but, again, within that it is very flexible. You find that within your own experience. If I talk to you that way, with your normal scientific Western mind may object, but when you really do it, you'll notice it

yourself.

When you accumulate a hundred thousand mandala offerings you will probably just go three times outward, three times inward and then use the short mandala offering of *sa zhi pö kyi*...while you pour rice on the mandala base for each of the items mentioned. In that case you only fill up one level.

*Mudra*. I'd like to mention here something about the hand gesture of the mandala offering which some people are doing. That is very nice, but when you do the hand gesture, don't use your empty hands. Either you use your mala around your hands or something else. Perhaps your bell; now would be the time to take it out,<sup>322</sup> but don't ring it! You could also use rice or flowers or something else.



### **Inner Mandala Offering**

*pag pa rab zä ser gyi sa zhä teng  
trak chen dü tsä chu yä chag chag tab  
sha trag me tok pang pung tshom bur gyur  
yän lag nam lä leng chen zhä dhang ne  
nyen lag leng tran gyä dur gyur pä ü  
khog pa ren chen dhül mang tseg pä tser*

<sup>320</sup> So, you can say the long mandala down to *zhe ne chin gyi lap tu söl* and immediately continue with *Jewa trak*.

<sup>321</sup> 1: Mount Meru, 2-5: four continents; 6: sun; 7: moon.

<sup>322</sup> Refers to how to handle sacred objects. See page 143.



go wo nam par gyal wä khang zang zä  
 meg nyi mün sel nyi ma dha wa dhang  
 nying ne yi zhin nor bu Rin po che  
 wang pö nang trol yong su gyur pa la  
 lha me dhö yön pal jor pün sum tshog  
 dhö gü gya thsö män dräl zang po dhi  
 tsa gyü lama yidam dön chok sum  
 sang gyä jang sempa wo nal jor ma  
 ten sung gya tso chä la leg bul na  
 thug je zhä nä jin lab ngö drub tsöl<sup>323</sup>

The inner mandala offering is not the same as the inner offering. What is normally meant by inner offering? An offering that is internally connected. The offering of the inner mandala is the center of all offerings; it is connected with and consists of the ingredients of your very own body.

*Pag pa*.... : The vajra-ground is the individual's body-skin.

*Trak chen*.....: You sprinkle the earth with your blood, nectar-blood. That is typical in India, where you sprinkle water to keep down the dust. That is why the Bodhisattva 'Always Crying' [Tib. *Tadungu*] had to cut his wrist and let the blood out to prepare the teaching place of his teacher, the Bodhisattva Chöpa.

*Sha trag*.. : Your flesh is the flowers put here and there on the earth.

*Yän lag*.... : Your limbs are the four continents.

*Khog pa*.....: Your inside structure or skeleton, is the jewel-mountain, actually your whole body is mount Meru with your head as the palace of Indra or Brahma.

*Meg nyi*.....: Your two eyes are the sun and the moon.

*Nying ne*.... : Your heart is the wishfulfilling jewel.

*Wang pö*.....: That is the rest, organs, intestines, and so forth. All is transformed into the unimaginable wealth of gods and men.

*Tsa gyü lama*.....: All that is offered to the root- and lineage masters, the Three Jewels, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, Dakas, Dakinis and Dharma-Protectors.

*Thug je*.....: You ask, "Do kindly accept it by your kindness."

In short, you put out your skin and think that it is as big as the universe and it is offered as the ground. Within that skin, all undesirable things have been washed away. The dust has been settled down by providing the blood and liquids in your body. On top of that your limbs, the two arms and the two legs, become the four continents. The spine is Mt. Meru and on top of that your head is the beautiful palace of Indra. Your two eyes become the sun and the moon. Your heart becomes a jewel. Tongue, ears, nose, , intestines, *etc.*, all of them are presented nicely and are decorated. Your flesh will be like flowers. What remains becomes the great collection of the most useful and important kinds of samsaric and non-samsaric wealth. The body and parts of it have been used by transforming them in my mind.

When you talk about offering the body, in a way it sounds horrific and filthy. But on the other hand it is one of the best ways of purification and accumulation of merit. This inner mandala offering follows the same principle as the Kusali offering in the Vajrayogini practice. They are among the best ways of purification and accumulation of merit. The result you get from this practice is so much bigger than anything else. Compare traveling on foot to flying, that big a difference I is! Nobody is cutting or chopping and nobody is killed. It's you yourself that is visualizing that and making your body into an object of offering. This is very helpful! I wanted to mention this here. In the outer mandala offering you have all these substances. Here you offer the equivalent made out of your body, without hesitation, without any attachment, without second thoughts like 'How can I exist, if I give all that up?' You offer this to the Lama, his circle and the whole Field of Merit.

In your everyday practice you don't have to say all these verses, but if you can briefly visualize it, that will be very helpful. You can think about it when you say the general mandala offering verse, par-

<sup>323</sup> Has not yet been translated into English. No other references found [yet]. The spelling of this verse is not [yet] conform the spelling of the new Jewel-Heart translation, of which it is not part. It has been taken from the root text distributed during the retreat of 1994 or 1995.

ticularly the line *I offer perfectly delightful environments and beings*. When you think about offering your body, you don't visualize that body as the yidam, but in the ordinary human form, cut apart and heaped up, with the head on top.

That is briefly the inner mandala offering, consisting of the parts of the body. This practice is very similar to the kusali-offering<sup>324</sup> in the Vajrayogini practice. There it is easy, because you first have the blessing with OM AH HUM HA HO HRIH and then the substances go into the skull cup and so on. It is easy to follow the practice, as the sadhana text will guide you through. You don't have that in the Lama Chöpa. So you just think that you take your skin off, lay it flat on the ground, expand it, put the legs and arms and intestines, *etc* on it and the head on the top, sun and moon above and offer that without hesitation. That accumulates a lot of merit. It works the same, the purpose is the same, the benefits are the same as with the Kusali offering.

The IDAM GURU RATNAMANDALAKAM NIRYATAYAMI you do at the end of all of your mandala offering, mainly in the case where you have the actual mandala built up. At that point then you dismantle it. But even if you don't say it, nothing is missing. That line is not even in the Lama Chöpa text. In the group practice, when the chanting master says 'IDAM GURU...' that is the signal to dismantle your mandala.

Audience: How do you dispose of old, no longer suitable mandala offering substances, or for that matter, broken vajra and bells and so on? What if your bell is broken and you just have a lonely, single vajra?

Rinpoche: Let the lonely, single vajra stand, it could be yours, it could be mine.

Audience: Sounds like a country and western song!

Rinpoche: When your mandala rice has become old and you want to replace it, fine, go ahead. The old mandala rice you can throw away, not just in the garbage but somewhere in the open field, or into a river. It does not really matter. Actually it is better to use barley. It is a little stronger and lasts longer. But you have to buy whole barley, not pearl barley.

Don't throw the lonely, single vajra out, get a nice, new bell companion for it. [laughs] If your bell or vajra is cracked, dispose of it. But the way you treat your bell and vajra is almost the same way you treat an image. If you can fix it, do that, if not, you have to dispose of it. In good, old Tibet people would leave these things near temples and monasteries. The monasteries used to build little buildings where people could throw all these things. Around here we don't have such facilities. But when you throw something like that out you can say

OM AH VAJRA MU –

The wisdom being may leave, the commitment being becomes whatever it is.

## Practice Mandala Offering

That is the most important mandala offering. It is actually part of the Heruka Lama Chöpa.

*nam dag trim kyi chu ter chen pö ü*  
*gya chen chung lug mang thö tsa wa lä*  
*tri mä rig pä yal ga bum trag gyä*  
*shan tring me jog nge shi mä tok tra*  
*lam tso tsum gyi zil dru zil ngar chak*  
*sa ser dha wa mä sog sa lam gyi*  
*drä pu rap zä pag sam ga tsal dhi*  
*drin chän la mei tsok nam nyi chir bul.*

*rab sil pang dhun chöd yon gya tso khyil*  
*dhad pai me tok tsul trim dri zim poi*  
*thö pai dron me tong wai dri chab dang*  
*shing jang dhen pa ting zhing dhut zhi zä*  
*she rab sum gyi rol mo na tsok throl*  
*ngo tsha trel yof dhod yon na tshok chäi*  
*ma thang me päi chod tren gya tsho dhi*

<sup>324</sup> See Gehlek Rinpoche, *Vajrayogini Teachings*.

*tsha gyud la mei tsok nam nyi chir bul*<sup>325</sup>

IDAM GURU RATNA MANDALAKAM NIRYATAYAMI

*Nam dag*....: There is a tree in the middle of a beautiful lake. The lake is the morality that you have protected. Your morality practice is offered as a great lake or ocean. Again, I want to remind you that morality here means keeping your own commitments. When I say keeping your own commitments, I don't mean saying your sadhanas. That is keeping your commitment, but we are not referring to that, but to protecting your vows; that is the morality. Vow here means: a) the self-liberation vow, whether the *upaseka* (lay) vow or *bikshu* (monk or nun's) vow, b) the Bodhisattva vow and c) the Vajrayana vow. Protecting yourself from their roots-downfalls or from breaking those vows is the morality which has now manifested here as the lake. This is the practice offering; whatever you practice becomes a basic beautiful environment.

*Gya chen*....: The tree itself is the learning part of the practice. You remember, the practice consists of learning, pondering or analyzing, and meditating. The learning part is the seven-jeweled tree. You offer all you have learned from the practice as the root of the offering tree.

*Tri mä*....: Whatever you have learned, you analyze. All your analyzing, your thinking, trying to understand it through various ways and your conclusions become the branches and the leaves. It is just like the Samantabhadra-tree. Actually this is a practice offering tree; your practice becomes offering.

*Shan tring*....: Your unshakable understanding, which can not be refuted by correct wisdom, becomes the blooming flowers on the tree.

*Lam tso sum*....: Your practice of the Three Principles of the Path becomes the dew-drops on those flowers. The dew-drops, the sweet taste, and the beauty are the Three Principles of the path. So, each one of the flowers carries the three principles.

*Sa ser*....: All your twenty-two bodhiminds<sup>326</sup>, the paths and stages *etc.*, all your spiritual developments are the fruit of the tree.

Protecting yourself from the down-falls is here the *argham*, the water offering; your intelligent faith is *pushpe*, the flower offering; keeping your vows perfect is *dhupe*, the scent; learning is *aloke*, the light; generosity is *gandhe*, the perfume; joyful concentration is *naividya*, the food, and the wisdom is *shabda*, the music. Every practice has become a different type of offering.

We make this mandala offering to Lama Buddha Vajradhara.

That is how you do the practice mandala offering. I just wanted to mention that briefly. By offering you get a double benefit: the benefit of the practice itself and above that the benefit of offering the practice. This way it is very effective and very helpful.

## Suchness Mandala Offering

*What you meditate*

Looking at the mandala, what you perceive is the actual mandala, whatever you are offering. You have your little mandala built up and that is what you literally see. In your mind you perceive the whole universe plus the inner body, *etc.* Within that, you strongly acknowledge that all this is in the nature of emptiness. That emptiness – when you see it – is free of true existence. Such freedom of true existence and the perception of the offering themselves, those two inseparably, that is the mandala offering free from true existence, or suchness mandala offering.

What you are offering is the universe and your body free from true existence. This is very useful, because many of us have very strong attachment to our body, not somebody else's body, but our own. If you tear the skin off and heap up all the bones, the kidneys, lungs, intestines, gall bladder, *etc.*, and you just leave it as an offering, it is as though these things have nothing more to do with you. You offer them without hesitation, attachment or even a single minute of doubt.

Actually, nothing is going to happen to you. We are all still here. But it is a great training for our mind. One of our most emotionally invested attachments is of course our body. We do everything for it. It is definitely important to be well and free of pain. But we feel that we have to do much more than that.

<sup>325</sup> See note 323 on page 159.

<sup>326</sup> See Glossary.

We have to decorate everything. We have to put on bright orange lipstick. How many times do we have to put lotions on our face and body? There is a very strong hold and we are clinging to it.

So without hesitation, you just tear everything off and arrange the legs and arms in the four directions, the rest in the middle and the head on top. That is a good way to cut strong attachment. Moreover, to offer without hesitation the thing you are most invested in and are holding on to the most accumulates tremendous merit. On top of that, you now recognize that this is also free of true existence. That is actually where we are really hanging on. We are not so much attached to the skin, the flesh and the bones, we are actually attached to the true existence of all that. And then we want that truly existing thing to look good, so you paint our eyebrows a little more with a pencil, apply some red color on the cheeks, but not too much, otherwise it looks artificial, paint your lips, *etc.*

Audience: Don't forget the men. They have to shave or have their beard cut just right. They have to work out and so on.

Rinpoche: Yes, they have to look slim and just the right way too. If you are noticing that you are becoming bald you get really worried about it and try to do something. On the other hand, once you really do become bald, you may give up the attachment to the hair, but then you have to make sure that your bald head is shiny and beautiful. This shows how attachment can shift.

A few years ago I noticed that I lost some hair on my temples. I thought that I was going to lose my hair, so I kept it quite long for a while. But then I did not lose any more, so I cut my hair short again. This really shows how attachment can shift. This tells you that whatever attachment you are holding on to is not actually real. What you are trying to hold on is really some identity. Then you have to make sure that this identity looks good and pleasing; that comes in afterwards.

Here you try to destroy that. Every day you cut that holding on into pieces, chop it up, heap it all on top of each other and say, 'Here you go, it is no longer mine.' That is the best way of letting it go, especially together with recognizing the suchness, which is the freedom of true existence, yet being able to perceive the whole universe and your body that you are offering. That is the suchness mandala offering.

If you want to do more, you can see yourself as another person looking at it as the offering proceeds, just like in the Vajrayogini Kusali practice, where you generate another small Vajrayogini who actually performs the cutting up, purifying and the offering. Here you just stand by and watch that as another person. You can generate yourself as yidam with consort, experiencing joy. Then it becomes a bliss-void mandala offering. That is the icing on the cake.

The suchness mandala offering is not commonly taught. There is no text available for that. You can do it in between the mandala offering and the practice offering.

The object to whom you offer all the mandala offerings, is the lama and the whole Field of Merit, as the verse says,

Refuge protector, treasure of compassion, perfect field for growing good fortune.

## Practice Offerings

*Ngö sham yi trül yi zhin gya tsö ngok  
si zhii nam kar le ong chö dze kyi  
dhap tong gyay pe kün gyi yi troh ching  
jik ten jik ten lay dhe rang zhen gyi*

*go sum ge way mey toh chi yang tra  
kün zang chö pay dri sung bum tro zhing  
lap sum rim nyi lam ngay drey dhen pei  
ga tsel je tsün la ma nyay chir bul*

- st. 26. **Within a wish-granting sea, a vast lotus  
Bearing actual and emanated offerings  
Arisen from samsara's and nirvana's virtues  
Captivates all hearts.  
The worldly and transcendent virtues**

- st. 27    **Of my own and others' three gateways brighten all places.  
This garden is suffused with myriad fragrances of all-good offerings,  
Is laden with fruits: the three trainings, two stages, and five paths.  
All this I offer to please you, precious Lama.**

*Ngö sham yi trül*: actually created and mentally emanated. You may wonder why you have to say 'actually created,' because of course it is your practice. But even so, you have to have some kind of base on which you make offerings. The offerings you have actually laid out and those mentally created are the base on which you offer. The difference here, what you really visualize here, is the *yi zhin gya tsö ngok*. *Gya tsö* is the ocean or the sea, *yi zhin* is wish-granting and *ngok* is either the center or the other side, depending on the context. In this case, let it be the center.

Actually, in the Tibetan, it does not really talk about a wish-fulfilling ocean. It is simply meant to be the ocean. The word is in the *Lama Chöpa* itself, but it has been brought in to make the length of the lines equal. There has to be the same number of syllables in each line to keep the meter intact. The *yi zhin* is mainly there because of the meter, otherwise that line would be a few syllables short. It is been added in from the poetry's point of view, rather than emphasizing the 'wish-granting'. So there is no additional explanation needed for 'wish-granting'. There is no such thing as a wish-granting sea. Although the ocean is the source of many jewels, no one refers to the ocean as wish-granting sea. So if you are doing a word translation you have to put in all these words. But our translation is not a word translation at all. We are doing a meaning translation.

So, in the center of this ocean you are going to offer a thousand-petalled vast lotus flower. The ocean represents the vast ocean of good karma which we have accumulated. The beautiful lotus which has a thousand petals is born out of that ocean. Actually, the ocean represents samsara and nirvana. So from the ocean of samsara and nirvana we have collected the most beautiful offerings. The lotus petals radiate 36,000 rays of light each, rays which each carry on its tip a variety of offerings. Whoever sees this will have to fall in love with it: such a beautiful flower, in such a beautiful environment, in such a beautiful ocean. It is so attractive that nobody can by-pass them, without paying attention. That is the meaning of *captivates all hearts*.

It represents all the white virtues of samsara and nirvana. *Si* and *zhi* are the first syllables of the Tibetan words for samsara and nirvana. So you visualize all these offerings that have come as result of everyone's samsaric and non-samsaric virtues. *Chö dze* is the offering material, the flowers blooming in that tree.

*Dhap tong gyay pe.....*: a lot of small different flowers are there, too. Then, of course, your learning, your thinking, your meditation practice, your circumambulating actions and your mandala offerings are all materialized as the most precious things that you can offer.

Again, remember that one of the most important practices you have is to generate bliss-void within you, trying to offer bliss-void to the object of refuge. Though the object of refuge is very much within the bliss-void nature, though they have nothing new to develop, just reminding them intensifies it. That is how we accumulate merit by bringing the offering of bliss to the object of refuge. In this practice, you have to very often think that you are in bliss. Though we don't yet have the power to develop bliss, by the power of the object of refuge here, you have faith and imagine, "I am becoming of that nature, so every offering that I have generated here is also of that nature." That is the way you make offerings.

*The worldly and transcendent virtues of my own and others' three gateways brighten all places*. That is a very good translation, but there is a concern. The word *tra* means bright, no doubt about it. But this is not talking about brightening all places. *Tra* refers to bright, blossoming flowers rather than brightening the places. They are the blossoming flowers of the virtues which we have accumulated through our three doorways. In Tibetan *ga tsel* really means garden. It is the garden that grows the fruit of the three trainings, two stages and five paths. So the 'blossoming' translation may work.

*Samsaric and non-samsaric*. As I said before, the offering materials are everybody's samsaric and non-samsaric virtues. If you use yourself as offering material, you have to divide the samsaric and the non-samsaric virtues within yourself. How do you do that? If you have not reached the third out of the five paths, the path of seeing, you don't even have non-samsaric offerings. If you have reached to above the third path, anything below the third is samsaric and above it is non-samsaric. Actually, that is where you draw the line. The path of seeing means seeing the truth. Once you have seen the truth, you are uncontami-

nated; if you haven't, you are contaminated. Although the path of seeing can be samsaric, the line is drawn here.

*Kün zang chö pay* is translated here as Samantabhadra offering.<sup>327</sup> This is often done in Western translations. Actually it literally means 'always good,' referring to what is good at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end. This specifically refers to the inseparability of bliss and void. We are Vajrayana practitioners, so we have to remember that all the time. You have to be very sexual and juicy about it. You can't forget it. The bliss-void combination is always good at the beginning, always good in the middle, and always good even up to the end! So when we say 'always good', we refer to that context, and not only to Samantabhadra. Any positive karma that has an influence of the bliss-void combination, that is what we are talking about here. It is brought in here as the 'multitude of scents' of the flowers which we offer.

*Three trainings – lap sum.* These are 1) the training of morality; 2) the – raining of concentration; 3) the training of wisdom. *Rim nyi* is the practice of development and completion stage.

*Five paths – lam ngay.*<sup>328</sup> These are 1) the path of accumulation, 2) the path of preparation, 3) the path of seeing, 4) the path of meditation, 5) the path of no more learning. What is the path of accumulation? Every positive karma we create is working towards the path of accumulation of merit. But are we really on the path of accumulation? Everybody has to answer that for himself or herself. What is the path of preparation? It is the preparation to the path of seeing. It has four divisions: heat, peak, patience and best dharma.

The five paths are common to all the three yanas, the Shrivakayana, the Pratyekayana and the Mahayana. Shravakas were the disciples of the Buddha who were not Mahayana practitioners, but Theravada practitioners. In Tibetan they are called *nyin tö*. That means Hearers. They are so-called because they listen to the teachings, and they do pass them on, but they don't practice. They are like post men. They themselves say, 'I listen to the Mahayana teachings given by Buddha, I don't practice, but I pass on the message.'

Pratyekas are self-liberated people. They appear in the periods in between Buddhas. They somehow find their way and they meditate and are able to cut samsara by themselves. When another Buddha appears and begins to shine, the Pratyeka Buddhas will close their shops and disappear.

Then Mahayana is divided into the sutra part and the tantra part. That is the real division into the three yanas. This is different from what is known very commonly in America as the division into Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana. That is not the traditional Buddhist way of counting, but from the practice point of view it is possible to count it that way.

In any case, all the three yanas carry the five paths accumulation of merit, preparation, seeing, meditation and no more learning. The order of the five paths is the same, but there are differences between the yanas. There are also divisions within the five paths.

*Two stages – rim nye.* The two stages are part of the Vajrayana. They are development stage and completion stage. In the *development stage* you are building up the mandala, from the beginning stage to the total mandala development. Like in Yamantaka, for example, you first accumulate merit and generate yourself in the form of the simple Yamantaka. Light radiates from you, invites the Lama Yamantaka and mandala, you do the seven purities, the four immeasurables, then you go into the Dharmakaya level, then you build the ground, the fence, the protection realms and the whole mandala. Then you go into the Sambhogakaya and then you generate the Nirmanakaya. You add up the deities on the body, including the three beings, Then you make offerings, *etc.* You are building everything up, one on top of the other. That is the development stage.

In the *completion stage* everything is already built up and perfectly okay. Now, you are finishing it, putting on the final touches. You are going into the body quietness, the mind quietness, the clear light, illusion body and the combination of these.

So, the three trainings, the two stages, and the five paths are the fruits of any developments we have. On the Mahayana path, the result is the Buddha level and on the Theravada path it is the Arhat level. All

<sup>327</sup> Also see page 86.

<sup>328</sup> More information on the five paths is available in *Gehlek Rimpoche, Perfection of Wisdom Mantra*

these qualities are projected out in the physical form of that great tree which has these beautiful flowers, leaves, and also fruits. This is what you use as your practice offering.

*Connection with the initiations.* The offerings are connected with the four initiations. Up to here the offerings, outer offerings, are related to the first initiation or *vase initiation*. It is not an offering to get an initiation, but the process works the same way as in the vase-initiation. The basic idea and purpose of the vase-initiation is to *block ordinary perception and ordinary conceptualization*. These offerings work on that principle; the manifestation is fantastic, like a fairy tale, magical, with nothing ordinary or usual. That is how it works in accordance with the first initiation.

## b. Inner Offerings

*Gur gum dhang dhen zang pö dri nge chen  
ro gyay pel dzin gya jay tung wa dhang  
chak kyu nga dhang drön ma nga la soh  
jang tok bar way dü tsi gya tsö chö*

- st. 28. **I offer a libation of finest tea,  
Fragrant with a hundred tastes and shining saffron color,  
Serving as the five hooks, five lamps, and all the rest,  
Purified, transformed, and increased to an ocean of nectar.**

The word ‘libation’ means a fancy offering of a drink. Apparently it is a special word for making offerings to a divine being. It is an old Roman custom where they would pour an offering of wine for the gods.

Normally a tea offering is an outer offering, but in this case the qualities of the tea have been applied to the inner offering. Tea should look nice and have the color of rich dark-reddish marigold, like the color of wine. It should be rich in caffeine and in color, perhaps like strong saffron. That’s what *gur gum dhang dhen* means. It must have very strong fragrance, *zang pö dri nge chen*. Also the power of its taste should be equivalent to a hundred flavors, *ro gyay pel dzin*. There should be a hundred different tastes, combined in one cup of tea. They developed from eight basic flavors. It is far better than British tea!

It is Chinese tea. The Tibetans, and in particular the Gelugpas, make a big deal out of Chinese tea. Tibetan tea is actually Chinese tea. I was told that apparently it is the worst kind of tea they have in China. After taking all the green leaves and the material for the green tea out, they collect all the leftovers in big bundles and then throw it to the Tibetans. But the Tibetans make a big deal of it: there is a very long tea offering, a poem about six pages long which has a commentary running into thirty pages.

Anyway, tea normally has nothing to do with the inner offering, it is an outer offering. However, here it is used for the inner offering. You know why? For the sake of the monks and nuns. Not to drink alcohol is a part of their vows and therefore tea is used as a substitute. As inner-offering material you can use liquor, alcohol, or anything. In earlier Tibet, during Marpa’s period, they used to drink a lot of *chang*, Tibetan barley beer, and that was used as inner-offering material, but during Tsongkhapa’s period things got so wild that alcohol became a problem. This is one of the reasons why Tsongkhapa put such emphasis on the *vinaya*, the monks’ and nuns’ rules. Discipline was brought up, because everybody, whether wearing red or yellow robes, was drinking *chang*. Tsongkhapa stopped this; he did not allow any *chang* in the monasteries, and substituted tea. So, Chinese tea actually is the inner-offering material here. That’s why such a big deal is made of it, the hundred different tastes, how it looks and smells, how strong it should be, how hot, all because of that. In India tea is used, in America you can use coffee. If you are not celibate, there are not so many objections to use alcohol. It is easier for us to use alcohol because it lasts longer.

In case you have already blessed the inner offering in the beginning of the *Lama Chöpa* at the verse *nature pure, offerings appear, arousing bliss void, filling space*, and if you have visualized well at that time, then that is fine. If you haven’t, then at this level, before you do the inner offering, you have to say at least OM AH HUM. It is recommended that at this point you pick up your inner offering and offer that three times. However, if you are having a group together and when you do tsoh, then it is recommended that only the vajra-master does that, not everybody else.

Audience: If the vajra master is not present, should the *umdze* (chanting leader) do it?

Rinpoche: There is always a vajra-master there. If the teacher is not there, there should at least be some senior students there. It is automatically understood. If the *umdze* is the vajra-master that is also fine. Besides, you don't necessarily have to do this. If you don't, you don't miss anything. But if you do, that is how it works.

Then as the actual inner offering we have *chak kyu nga dhang drön ma nga la soh*, the five hooks and the five lamps. They are the same. Why is it called five lamps? Because it helps the practitioner clear the emotions. The five lamps are like light, which overpowers the darkness of ignorance. And the five hooks are so called because they help the individual to 'hook' the siddhis, the attainments. The names are interchangeable, you can call the five meats the five hooks or the five nectars the five hooks. Let us stick to the meats as the hooks and the nectars as the lights.<sup>329</sup> Because of the strict discipline you have this wonderful, beautiful colored, hundred-taste Chinese tea; you can't then suddenly have meats and nectars, so you make it into hooks and lights.

*Jang tok bar* – purified, transformed, and increased. You remember the formula: 'All faults of color, smell, and potential are purified, multiplied, and transformed into an ocean of nectar.'<sup>330</sup> *Jang* means to purify, *tok* is make it into nectar, *bar* is make it into an ocean. These words are not a translation, not even abbreviated, they are signals, symbols. It is like Chinese characters: from one character, you get the whole message. *Tok* means, 'he is in our group, on our side.' The word is borrowed from that and means here that the offering has become a part of nectar, which means: transformed. If you look at the five meats and five nectars, all these dirty, terrible things are collected and that is why you need to purify and transform them into pure things, which is done by AH. A fire flaring up is *bar*, and borrowed from that, it means 'increased.' In the Tibetan language you can do that. You borrow one syllable and use it to convey a message. That is why it can be very short. So *jang tok bar* completely covers the OM-AH-HUM business.

*Three kinds of nectar. Dü tsi gya tsö chö: an ocean of nectar.* I offer that nectar to the Supreme Field. *Dütsi* is nectar or amrita. What does nectar mean? There are three kinds: a) nectar that can prevent illnesses or medicinal nectar; b) nectar which prevents death or life-nectar; c) uncontaminated nectar or wisdom-nectar. Again, the whole thing is very interesting. Normally when you say amrita or nectar, you think of some kind of liquid, but here, no. It is a liquid you are serving, but the message goes beyond that: the medicinal nectar is the healing practices you have, the nectar preventing death is the three-kaya-practice, the nectar preventing ignorance is the wisdom that understands emptiness.

#### *Visualization of the blessing*

The three letters radiate light, collect all the blessings and power of all the Buddhas. The Buddhas' body blessings dissolve to the letter OM, their speech blessings into the letter AH and their mind ones into the letter HUM.

The steam of the boiling offerings melts the HUM which drops into the blessed material. It goes round three times, dissolves into the substance and *purifies* it.

AH drops down, goes round three times and *transforms* the impure things into pure things.

Finally OM *multiplies* the offering.

You offer that inner offering to the root master and the Supreme Field of Merit. They accept it. The master has a one-spoked vajra tongue. It is of red light nature and comes out like a straw.

You make the gesture of dipping your left ring-finger into the offering; you don't actually do it. The red-light vajra tongue takes the inner offering.

<sup>329</sup> The inner offering symbolically uses the bodily substances of sentient beings. Five meats: Cow, dog, elephant, horse, human flesh. Five nectars: excrement, brains, sperm, blood and urine. For a detailed description of the practice of the inner offering according to the practice of Vajrayogini see Gehlek Rinpoche, *Vajrayogini Teachings*. The practice of the inner offering according to the Yamantaka practice is slightly different. See Gehlek Rinpoche, *Solitary Yamantaka Teachings on the Generation stage*.

<sup>330</sup> Prayer for blessing the food.



Another way of doing is by generating offering deities – like in Vajrayogini. They pick up offering bowls and make the offering to the lama and the retinue of the mandala.

Sometimes you may pick up a little bit of offering and sprinkle it, but not usually. One tantra says that when you flick the offering, you do that between left thumb and ring finger. The thumb represents the Mt. Meru and the ring finger the ocean. So between that you are picking up the inner offering.

All this is in the inner offering. That is why Marpa Lotsawa bragged that his inner offering was totally different from what anybody else had. The inner offering is connected with the **secret initiation**.

Why is it called inner offering? Because it is connected with the inner substances of a person or living being. Basically it is the five meats and five nectars, as they are called. The five meats are: the flesh of human, elephant, dog, horse and cow. The five nectars are urine, blood, excrement, semen, marrow. There are reasons they are labeled that way. We offer them, but do we actually eat or drink them? No! We do not even literally use them. When people see it, they're bound to misunderstand it.

Actually the reason why this is done, is that when you really become high-level developed, no matter whatever good or bad it may be, it doesn't really matter. When you are really able to actually see reality, then good and bad is the same thing; there is no separation<sup>331</sup>. And persons who are capable of it, transform them into nectar. That's why this inner offering is inner-person related. If someone is literally able to transform these substances into nectar, then he or she has the actual inner offering. The others, like us, are sort of copycats. We copy them. We can't transform those substances so we use the tea, whiskey or something.

Thinking, visualizing them in the form of those and then transforming them into nectar and offering it to the Supreme Field is training ourselves to be able to transform. That is the level at which we are using this. If you become perfect, you will be able to do it.

Such a person has the capacity to look at a fruit tree and just by looking have the fruit drop down; not only having it drop down, but being able to put it back, too. You are only allowed to make it drop if you know how to put it back. So this is the test for the so-called crazy-wisdom beings. This is the test for them and that's why this inner offering is put at the beginning. For our practice it is a sort of jigsaw puzzle that we throw at the kids, let them make something and get praised at the end: hey, great! In that manner the inner offering has been thrown at the beginning of the sadhana for us to fool around. But we don't use the materials; we do it only mentally.

If you make a *tsoh*-offering during the teachings, you make it at this point. During the *Lama Chöpa* teachings it is customary to make a *tsoh* offering three times; in the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the teaching. So there will be a *tsoh* offering today. We may not do the long chanting and all this, but a short *tsoh* offering we'll do.<sup>332</sup>

### c. Secret Offerings

*Yi ong lang tsö pal dzin druk chu zhii*  
*dhö pay gyü tsal la kay lü tra ma*  
*zhing kye ngak kye lhen kye po nyei tsoh*  
*dzey duk gyü may chak gya nam kyang büi*

st. 29. **I offer beautiful, magical consorts, a host of muses**  
**Born of heavens, poetry, spontaneity,**  
**Graceful mistresses of sixty-four passionate arts,**  
**Endowed with the enchanting glow of youth.**

<sup>331</sup> As one of the verses of the *tsoh* offering in the Vajrayogini practice says: "Here now regard all things as good! Let this gathering have no doubt! Please (this Host), knowing oneness Of Brahmin, outcaste, dog, and pig!"

<sup>332</sup> At what points the *tsoh* is done depends on the purpose. 1) If *thoh* is done for the purpose of purification, it should be done just before the purification verse in the *Seven limbs*. 2) If *tsoh* is done for longevity of the Guru -which could be in connection with a *ten zhuk* (detailed longevity ritual)- the first three verses of the *tsoh* -blessing and invocation- should be done at this point, because you are offering consorts and it links with the 5 dakinis dancing and requesting the lama to stay in case you're also doing a *ten zhuk*; actually offering the *tsoh* should be done just before the verse asking the guru not to pass away in the *Seven Limbs*. 3) If *tsoh* is done for the purpose of attaining swift realizations on the path, the *tsoh* should be done just before *Seeking Blessings to Realize the Stages of the Path*.

This is the juicy one. It is the consort offering. *Yi ong lang tsö* means a beautiful appearance. Actually you are giving a messenger, *po nya*, to the Supreme Field of Merit. What is the meaning of ‘muse’? It sounds like that mousse we have in Michigan, the one with the antlers. Audience: It is another thing from the Greek-Roman tradition and means a goddess who is a special inspiring companion. Rinpoche: That muse is not only beautiful but also youthful. She is about 16 years old. Audience: That is age discrimination. Rinpoche: Actually she always remains 16, the age doesn’t go up.

*Consort.* She is extremely rich in physical qualities. Excuse me, but this is going to be extremely funny. Don’t feel insulted. Her physical appearance is very attractive and beautiful. Her body itself is extremely soft and wonderful. Just touching it would probably give you a tremendous amount of joy, particularly, now close your eyes, at the lower part of the body, which is strong and powerful and wonderful, not necessarily bulky, though. Don’t laugh, if you laugh I won’t be able to do it. She is rich in sex organs. I probably should leave it here; it becomes too detailed in the commentary. At the upper part of the body, the nipples are well formed and erect and the gap in between the breasts is very small. A beautiful smell automatically comes from her body, and she is extremely well qualified for the various sexual activities, including hugging, kissing, *etc.*, all the 64 arts of love.<sup>333</sup>

Why do you have to visualize something like that? If you are offering a female consort, as in this case, the female qualities are as described. If you are offering a male consort, similarly you visualize the male qualities. He will be youthful and strong, well-muscled, without fat, *etc.* You have to do all this because you want to accumulate the specific causes to develop a beautiful, handsome illusion body. That’s why we emphasize the physical qualities so much here. So in direct relation to what you are visualizing or imagining, you are accumulating merit. If you are a short person like me, who is something like five foot five and a half, then you will have a short illusion body and a short Buddha, too. Therefore, you want to visualize the consort here as six feet tall. What you really should visualize here is Prince Charming and Cinderella. If you visualize this, this is what you are going to get at the illusion body level. Actually, Buddha supposedly was very tall – particularly when you add up the ushnisha!

This is the secret offering (I don’t have to tell you why it is called secret) which is connected with the *wisdom initiation*. In the wisdom initiation, essentially this same visualization is used, but there is neither time nor opportunity to go over the qualities in detail. But during the *Lama Chöpa* teachings, one time at least, we have to go into that much detail, which we have done now.

The consort is something like a magician’s manifestation. This comparison is brought in here because the illusion body is called *gyu lu*, which is like a magician’s illusion, too. *Dzey duk gyu may chak gya nam kyang büil*. *Gyu may chak gya* means actually consort.

*Nang che top.* Another reason for this practice is to develop the *nang che top*: 1) *nang wa kar lam pa*, white appearance; 2) *che pa mar lam pa*, red increase; 3) *nye top nak lam pa*, black near-attainment. You have these three stages during the dissolution stage of the death process. This is the major process of Vajrayana practice. In order to develop that properly, you generate the necessary karma by offering the consort. This offering is actually the direct cause for developing the perfect karma to build up that practice. The reason why the consort should be perfect in appearance is, as we said before, in order to develop the illusion body.

What we are talking about now is the link to the essence of the practice which we want to develop within this life-time. Going through that process with awareness is the essence of the completion stage. At that level only, you have the link between sexuality and spirituality. It is only on this very high level that practitioners can generate the clear light and the illusion body. That’s why the secret offering is important.

*The Three Types of Messengers or Consorts*<sup>334</sup>. The consort simply being of the opposite sex is not enough to be consort. The consort has to be qualified. In our translation they are called ‘mistresses of the sixty-four passionate arts’.

Those are called *zhing kye*, field-born or field-grown, *ngak kye*, mantra-born, and *lhen kye*, simultaneously-born. That refers to whether the consort is at the development stage, the completion stage, or at

<sup>333</sup> Literature: Gedün Chöpel, trans. J. Hopkins, *Tibetan Arts of Love*.

<sup>334</sup> Also called mudra or knowledge-woman.

the stage of a fully enlightened being. In our translation we call them *born of heavens* or *zhing kye*, *poetry* or *ngak kye*, and *spontaneity* or *lhen kye* – that is the consort at the level of clear light or union.

Another explanation is that those who have had initiation and keep the commitments are the field-born, and those who have achieved some development in the creation stage are called mantra-born, and those who have achieved the illusion body and above are called simultaneously-born.

There is still another way of explaining. Field-born are those Dakinis who are alive, like in the twenty-four sacred places. As to the question of the twenty-four sacred places, there are literally twenty-four sacred places in India, but with Heruka practitioners the twenty-four sacred places are available in the individual's body, included in the sixty-two deities Heruka body-mandala. Not only that; it is repeatedly mentioned in the *Heruka tantra* that where there are serious practitioners of Heruka or Vajrayogini the twenty-four sacred places will be established literally nearby on the available ground. That is why, though there are the twenty-four sacred places in India, when there are a number of mother-tantra practitioners available in the West, the twenty-four sacred places are going to be established in the West, for sure. I think whether the twenty-four sacred places can literally be established, it boils down to that. Mantra-born is the name for one who has completed the gross development stage and is going on to the subtle development stage or has completed the subtle development stage. Simultaneously-born are those who have really grown within themselves the bliss-void combination simultaneously. That is why we talk about that business of body and mind on the same frequency.

The text mentions *zhing kye*, *ngak kye* *lhen kye po nyei tsoh*. That probably means that the *po nya* are the consorts who are not at that level; that is why they are mentioned as a separate category. I don't want to explain the *po nya*, it is very explicit. Better not go into that.

The consorts offered have been grown out of yourself, out of your own bliss-void nature, and are offered within the mandala to Lama Buddha Vajradhara. In absolute reality the consort is not another person but is within yourself. The wisdom part of it is actually the consort, grown out of bliss-void nature. They dissolve into the body of Lama Vajradhara's consort, Dorje Yingchukma [Skt. Vajradhatu Ishvari]. We are talking on the basis of Guhyasamaja, so it is Dorje Yingchukma; in the case of Lama Heruka it is Vajrayogini, in the case of Lama Yamantaka it is Vajra Zombini. Lama Vajradhara goes into union with Dorje Yingchukma and develops bliss and void. That is nothing new to be developed, but it is further intensified. And you imagine that Lama Vajradhara and the consort Dorje Yingchukma are completely absorbed in the union of bliss and void.

This enormous joy brought to Lama Buddha Vajradhara is shared with everyone in the Field of Merit because they are not separate of Lama Buddha Vajradhara. In absolute reality they are all one; because of this, when one of them gets a consort, everyone of them gets a consort, rather than a zillion consorts going on there. This is an important point I'd like to make here.

### Visualization

You are in the form of the Lama Yidam. From your heart level you generate those beautiful consorts. They are very youthful, with beautiful bodies. These consorts go up to the Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang and they are hugging his mind. This refers to the Buddha Vajradhara at the heart level, the concentration being, rather than touching the outer monk's form or Shakyamuni at the heart level. So they are hugging Buddha Vajradhara. He has a consort anyway.

These consorts dissolve and become oneness with that existing consort. Then they go into union and develop the four joys of dripping the bodhicitta from the crown down to the secret sex organ, forward and backward. They develop great joy. That is the secret offering as well as the third initiation.

So, you manifest those Dakinis and you offer them to Lama Vajradhara by dissolving them into Dorje Yingchukma. It is not like in the Vajrayogini practice where you yourself go,<sup>335</sup> here one more step is taken. In reality, it is you, the Lama's consort, Lama Vajradhara, all of them; and there is more than that, much more than that.

<sup>335</sup> Gehlek Rimpoche, *Vajrayogini Teachings*, on the secret offering: "You generate a lot of wonderful dakinis from your heart, who transform into Vajrayoginis. In your reality, it has to be yourself in the form of the consort. You offer these to the Lama."

All the ‘body mandala’ deities have consorts and you can generate duplicates for all of them, if your mind can manage. In reality there is no new bliss-void to be generated by the Supreme Field of Merit, but they are energized more, and by thinking that they develop bliss-void, that thinking itself is the offering and the acceptance of the offering.

*Yi* is mind; *ong* represents something that goes well with the mind. It means something the mind will very happily accept, acknowledge, be drawn towards, come close to and share in, which means attractive. *Lang tsö pal dzin* means youthful. The commentary says here that you generate from your heart lotus-style consorts, conchshell-style consorts, elephant-style consorts or wild-animal-style consorts. That itself is very interesting, the names give you a little message.<sup>336</sup>

*Dö payi gyü tsal*: the methods for increasing one’s desire by using the sixty-four arts of love. There’s a long commentary here on those sixty-four arts. Basically I think there are eight: embracing, kissing, pinching, biting, touching, noise making, special ways of touching special points, and where and how. Those eight worked out in details is how it becomes sixty-four arts of love.<sup>337</sup> Each of the eight has grosser and more refined levels.

There is another sixty-four, very similar, carrying the same name. The sixty-four normally raised in the Tibetan textbooks, are probably the male qualities: how their physical quality should be, how the stance should be, how they can shoot the arrow away, and how they throw stones; all in a sort of old style of a primitive type of art. There’s another one, very similar, for female qualities, however the male/female qualities go both the same way.

### *Vajrayana and Delusions*

A big point now. It is said that this particular art grows delusion and attachment, but that these sixty-four arts of offering are not to grow delusion but to grow bliss and joy, bliss which is not only the direct opponent to attachment, but the transformation of passion from negative into positive. If it is misused to develop attachment, then it does not become that bliss.

Negative passion transformed into positive passion, how come? Very simple. The person who is practicing this is at the level of the Vajrayana, so basically that person has a very strong ground of overcoming negativities, the Three Principles. Particularly at the level of seeking freedom, the person has already hit and hit hard on the heads of those delusions, so they don’t dare rise up. Therefore, people who are on this level simply develop the joy and bliss; there is no delusion involved. So, it is a positive activity rather than a negative activity. That is one point.

Another point. When you are at the beginning level, the Sutrayana level, you do fight against the delusions. However you fight with caution; if you try to push them down too harshly, they’ll backfire on you. Not only do you experience this reaction, sometimes the individual completely loses his mental balance. That’s why in Sutrayana there are the three points. Until you are completely trained, until your mind is ripened, until you have a perfect practice, it is not recommended to try to hit them down completely; not only it is not recommended, but it is recommended *not* to do it. Unless you have a complete environmental and conditional support and also enough power within you, you are cautioned not to jump on a delusion and try to hit it completely. That is the beginning, the Sutrayana level.

Over here now, you are recommended to hit them completely, with a single force to hit all the delusions. The reasons they give you are those I mentioned: you have a very strong background of determination to be free, you have a very strong background of compassion, and particularly a very strong background of the perfect view. I mean, we all have it artificially, but still we can go halfway thoroughly and half way cautiously. Probably that is applicable for us.

Perfect Vajrayana practitioners are now supposed to overcome the delusions with a single-pointed mind, so that there is no chance for them to rise. Therefore, anything here that normally brings delusions, will not bring delusions to those practitioners. Not only does it not bring the delusions, it becomes strength and a source of development. That’s why the Vajrayana is considered so important, very powerful and relaxed.

Not only that, for Vajrayana practitioners who have reached the perfection of the level of three quietnesses, the body, speech, and mind quietness,<sup>338</sup> it is absolutely necessary to have bliss and void and if poss-

<sup>336</sup> See Gedün Chöpel, trans. J. Hopkins, *Tibetan Arts of Love*, p. 155-157.

<sup>337</sup> Gedün Chöpel, trans. J. Hopkins, *Tibetan Arts of Love*, ch. 6-12.

<sup>338</sup> Also called isolation of body, of speech and of mind. Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Tantric Grounds and Paths*, p. 105-175.

ible simultaneous-born bliss-void wisdom-nature. When you have that level, the ultimate mind of mental quietness combined with the clear-light wisdom, you can act in all those manners. Otherwise, though we normally say that in Vajrayana attachment is taken as a path, if under the disguise of taking attachment as a path you go wild or act too crazy, it might not be appropriate.

*Crazy wisdom.* Many great practitioners have developed first the basic Three Principles of the path, on top of that the Vajrayana development stage, on top of that the completion stage, in the level of the completion stage the body quietness, speech quietness and mental quietness. At the end of the level of mental quietness, the idea of crazy wisdom can apply to those persons. Only on that level. I don't think that applies to any one of us; just because we have a Vajrayana practice, acting wild under the guise of being a Vajrayana practitioner may not be allowed.

As one lama said, "Some birds can fly from the high mountains, others will fall flatly down." For the past several years, a number of Western Buddhist teachers have held different conferences on this issue. They had the initial conference in Dharamsala with His Holiness. I saw an edited version of the video of that conference. In it, on the idea of the crazy wisdom, His Holiness said, "A crazy wisdom person can eat shit."

It's true, even in this commentary it says, "What you have to offer to the Lama is shit and urine." That does not mean you literally offer this, but at the crazy wisdom level everything that appears to you is pure. "All males are Avalokiteshvara and all females are Tara," we said earlier. Everything whatsoever that you taste is wonderful as nectar.

Even in Sutrayana you find that mentioned. One summer, Buddha and his disciples had great difficulties with their food. Their benefactor did not offer good food to the Buddha and his retinue and disciples, but only raw useless, rotten grains. This went on for three months. Shariputra or Maudgalputra, one of them, was very worried. He went to Buddha and said, "For us it's okay, but even you, Buddha, have to go through this difficulty. And since you said that you're committed to be here for three months, this must be very hard." Buddha said, "That's okay; for you people it's purification, and don't worry about me." Shariputra said, "For us it's okay, but for you?" Buddha said, "You've no idea what my taste experience is. I'll give you a little taste." Buddha took a toothpick, picked a tiny little thing out of that stuff and gave it to Shariputra. Shariputra ate it and it had the taste of hundred different tastes put together, like earlier we talked about the China tea. Shariputra had never tasted such a wonderful thing in his life, nor had he even heard about it. You also find stories like that in the Vimalakirti meetings,<sup>339</sup> which are very interesting.

Enlightened beings have that capacity. That's why whether you offer urine or shit or wonderful things, they experience the same pure taste. That is the crazy wisdom level.

#### d. Suchness Offerings

Next is the suchness offering, connected with the fourth or *word initiation*. The fourth initiation is the actual introduction to enlightenment, a total introduction to total enlightenment. It is way over our heads. But it is customary to read the words and give a little explanation, depending on the people who are listening and on the quality of the Vajra-Master who gives the initiation.

We talk about enlightenment without having much of an idea what it is. The fourth initiation really introduces enlightenment, describing what it is, but I don't think we can really get the whole meaning, just the word. That is why it is called word initiation. Another reason is because there is no material other than words involved.

*Drip dral lhen kyay dhe way ye she che  
chö kün rang zhin trö dhang drel wei yeeng  
yeer mey lhiin drup ma sam jö la dhay  
dhön dham jang chup sem choh khyö la bü*

- st. 30. **I offer supreme, ultimate Bodhimind,  
Unobstructed bliss and wisdom arising as one,  
Inseparable from the nature of all,**

<sup>339</sup> Vimalakirti nirdesa sutra. Translation into English: R. Thurman, *The Holy Teachings of Vimalakirti*.

**Spontaneous, beyond expression in thought or word.**

Now, if you pay attention here, we may perhaps gain some understanding. What are the words? *Drip dral* means free of obstacles, delusions, difficulties.

*Obstacles of the three yanās.* What are the obstacles? The number one obstacle is the *delusions*. This applies even at the Hinayana level. For Mahayana, the obstacle is not the delusions alone, but, in addition to that, the *imprints of the delusions*. We know and understand the direct delusions; we feel how they obstruct us. The imprints of the delusions are subtler. We can't really comprehend how they obstruct, except through metaphor: if you use a lot of garlic, you may wash the utensils used, soak them for a long time, but even then you will smell it. The imprints of the delusions are like the garlic smell. The delusions are gone at the Arhat level, but Arhats have the garlic smell, they smell of garlic a lot. At the Mahayana level, we try to remove the garlic smell as well.

At the Vajrayana level, the obstacles are even more subtle: *dualistic perception* and the *imprints of dualistic perception*, even at the level of the subtle mind of the dying process, where you have the whitish, reddish, and dark feeling. The subtle dualistic obstacles are the obstacles in Vajrayana. That goes beyond the garlic smell, it is dualistic mind, even at the very subtle level at the time of the death. So at the Vajrayana level, the obstacle changes from delusions to ordinary perception and ordinary conceptualization, which is what dualism means here. *Drip dral* means free from Hinayana, Mahayana and even Vajrayana obstacles.

*Lhen kyay* means simultaneously born. This describes the reality of Lama Vajradhara, who is not only free from all obstacles, but also blissful. The nature of Lama Vajradhara is bliss, *dhe*. Not only ordinary bliss, but wisdom-bliss, *dhe way ye she*. Not only wisdom-bliss, but also simultaneously born wisdom-bliss. Simultaneously born here indicates that it is not only wisdom, but also bliss, and that not only it is bliss, but also wisdom, that the two of them are together in one mind, are perceived as one, functioning together.

*Lhen kyay dhe way ye she che* is the simultaneous born joy-wisdom, inseparable from the nature of all phenomena: *chö kün rang zhin*. *Chö* is dharma, *kün* is all, *rang zhin* is nature, *trö dhang drel wei yeeng* means no inherent existence. This really refers to the clear light. Not only me but all existence, samsaric or non-samsaric, is free of true existence. The nature of all is to be free of natural existence. That is called *Dharmadhatu*. *Yeeng* means *Dharmadhatu*.

*One taste.* Remember the Yamantaka teaching where we said that the essence of Manjushri is the essence of all phenomena.<sup>340</sup> It is the same thing here. The joy which acknowledges wisdom free from obstacles is actually the essence or the absolute reality of all existence. Free from obstacles means total knowledge, which is ultimate. The mind which acknowledges or observes that wisdom and becomes one with it, not only observes it but also is in the nature of joy. So it observes that wisdom with joy; this is the bliss-void combination, actually. You enjoy whatever you are doing, you have tremendous joy. You really become one, you have lost the separation. At that level, having the joy of acknowledging emptiness does not require much effort, it happens simultaneously. One brings the other automatically.

That wisdom is the clear light, and that very clear light is of the same taste, *ro nyam*. If you mix two foods together thoroughly, they give you one taste, when not mixed completely they give you two different tastes. Here, same taste means that the mind of Lama Vajradhara is totally merged with emptiness. That mind merged with emptiness is called the mind of clear light. They are merged like water in water, milk in milk, no separation. That is the mind part. The other part, which is the body, form, or physical aspect, is nothing but consciousness and energy, in Tibetan called 'air'; I like to call it energy. Nothing but consciousness and energy combined together. This combined energy and consciousness, the subtle body, will have sexual union with your internal consort, the clear light. That is the one-taste business.

Whenever you hear, the consort within or the inner consort, it means there is nothing separate or external, but internally that wisdom-natured energy is the merging of the energy and consciousness mixed together, same taste, non-separable. That is called ultimate union. Not only do you offer the consort to Lama Vajradhara in the union that I explained above: the real, subtle union is of the subtle part of the body (combination of consciousness and energy) and clear-light wisdom. This union itself is totally ab-

<sup>340</sup> See note 262 on page 117.

sorbed into bliss, yet absolutely clear and lucid. The union of bliss and emptiness is not a dull state, it is full of joy and tremendously lucid. That is the union.<sup>341</sup>

Though we do not yet have that capability, here it is customary and also a great omen to think:

By offering this and by bringing the experience of voidness and bliss to Lama Vajradhara, because of the kindness, the compassion and the power of Lama Vajradhara, I also experience the same thing.

At least you have to think and feel that some kind of joyful nature has developed within you, within your mind-stream and body. That is considered a very important omen.

*Yeer mey* is without separation. That means that both, object and observer, are inseparable. The mind and the joy are inseparable. In other words, the joy nature mind and the perceived object, which is wisdom, are inseparable. *Lhün drup* is effortless, giving you the idea of primordial, *ma sam* means beyond expression. At the level of such attainment, before you even reach the level of the third path, if you wanted to talk about the experience you are having, you would be unable to talk about it. There are people who have directly seen emptiness even before developing bodhimind. Some great intelligent people go that way. It goes beyond expressing or even beyond imagining or thinking, *ma sam*. Beyond imagining is the case for ordinary people.

But for Aryas or extraordinary people, the experience will be like a dream of a deaf and dumb person. If the deaf and dumb have an interesting dream and try to communicate it, it is extremely difficult. They have the experience but cannot share it. *Ma sam* means beyond even thinking or imagining, whereas *jö la* means beyond words which is the situation of extraordinary person: it is like the dream of the deaf and dumb, inexpressible. That is absolute bodhimind, *dhön dham jang chup sem*. *Dhön dham* is absolute or ultimate, *jang chup* is bodhi, *sem* is mind. The inexpressible experience of emptiness transforms conventional bodhimind into absolute bodhimind.

Before, during the secret offering, you have offered consorts. You have encouraged the Supreme Field of Merit to go into sexual union. Along with the sexual union they develop joy, which when it recognizes emptiness, becomes bliss-void nature. Now you acknowledge that state of bliss-void inseparable as Dharmakaya of joy. This joy-natured Dharmakaya is what you are actually offering during the suchness offering. So here you are not offering consorts, nor joy, nor emptiness, not the recognition of emptiness, but the level of union itself is acknowledged as joy-Dharmakaya and that is what you offer. You can see, it is going down to a very refined, much deeper level here. In actual reality there is nothing to offer, but, because you experience and meditate on ultimate bodhimind, the same experience grows in the objects of the Supreme Field of Merit. That is the meaning of offering here. You become an instrument of increasing that feeling within them. Although they have the continuous experience of the absolute bodhimind, still it gives them an extra ‘kick’ and brings them that extra feeling.

The following question also rises: We have said that during the secret offering the generated consorts dissolve to the consort of Vajradhara. What about the many celibate beings in the Supreme Field who do not have a consort? It does not matter. Let them remain dry! (I am joking). The reality is that although you see so many different emanated forms there, they are all the manifestations of Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang, in particular Dorjechang. Since they are all oneness with Dorjechang, although physically no consorts have been offered to them, however, they are not left dry. That is what the teaching tradition tells you. The justification has been done in that way. In reality they are all one person. They are all simply manifestations of the one person. So their bliss-void nature wisdom too, has been grown even further through that process. This is what you visualize, think about and acknowledge.

#### e. Medicine Offerings and Offering Self as Service

*Nyön mong zhi gya tsa zhü nay jom pay  
zang pö men gyi je drak na tsoh dhang*

<sup>341</sup> Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 108: The practitioner “unites inseparably the subjective wisdom of simultaneous bliss realizing emptiness with the total absence of dualistic appearance of subject and object.”

*kyö nye gyi chir dhah dren bül lak na*  
*nam kha ji si bang su zung dhu söl*

- st. 31. **I offer an array of fine medicines**  
**To cure the afflictions of four hundred and four delusions,**  
**And I offer myself as a servant to please you.**  
**Please keep me in your service as long as space endures.**

The medicine you offer here to the Supreme Field is the medicine which destroys illnesses. *Ne* is illness, *zhi gya tsa zhii* is four hundred and four, *nyön mong* is delusions, *jom pay* is antidote; the word *jom* gives you the message of total destruction, finishing it off without anything left.

Tibetan Buddhists believe very strongly that each and every illness we experience is the result of our negative delusions. Because of them, we have the four hundred and four illnesses. It actually says in the texts ‘more than 404’ so they just use a high number. But again, there are ways and means of counting up to 404 – but don’t let me count! The medical treatises tell you how many different diseases grow from attachment, how many from hatred, how many from ignorance. In the medical texts these are called the ‘three poisons’. They are called poisons, because they cause different illnesses. As result you have *lung*, *tri pa* and *pe ge*, that is wind, bile and phlegm. These are medical terms.<sup>342</sup>

Actually, most of our basic emotional problems are included in the *lung* category; they are not necessarily air problems. All our chronic diseases, like immune deficiencies and problems with digestion, fall under the *pe ge* category. Jaundice, obesity, *etc.*, are examples of the *tri pa* group. Each one of them is divided into forty-two groups. Also, in the Tibetan medical text books, they teach in accordance with basic Buddhist principles. You have the *kun da*, *kye wang*, *yung dru*: the nature, the control of others, the fabricated. These are three categories we talk about in Buddhist philosophy and the very same thing they talk about in the medical treatises.

Anyway, whatever the medication for all these illnesses may be, whether it is pills, or liquids, or boiled herbs, you offer all of them to the Supreme Field of Merit. The purpose is to accumulate the merit to be able to cure yourself from the negative emotions.

The second part of this verse is about offering oneself as a servant to the Supreme Field of Merit in order to make them happy. *Servant* is the direct translation. But that could cause some difficulties with the American culture. Perhaps we should say *I offer my service* rather than *I offer myself as servant*. Remember we are not making a word translation.

You are willing to offer your body, mind, and speech, and ask them to accept your offer until space becomes non-space, which is never going to happen. So it is as long as there is existence. Offering yourself as a subject means accepting the rules of Lama Vajradhara. The rules are that you cannot harm anybody, you have to help all beings.

### *Visualization*

As usual, generate from your body offering Dakas or Dakinis carrying jeweled vessels, trays, or any convenient special containers. In these, we offer these medicines to Lama Vajradhara, not because Lama Vajradhara is sick, but because Lama Vajradhara may be able to use these medicines.

By the virtue of the offering of these medicines and the acceptance of the offering, may all those who are sick be freed from their suffering, may they recover fully and be totally healed.

Also, I offer my service. I put myself under the discipline of the rules, which means I am not going to harm anybody, I will be helpful to all and, in particular, I will try to bring all sentient beings to the level of total joy and enlightenment.

Even you try to bring one single being to enlightenment, even that will make Lama Vajradhara and the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas absolutely happy. That is how this business of being a subject or servant works out.

<sup>342</sup> Literature: Dr. Lobsang Ragpay, *Tibetan Medicine, A Holistic Approach to Better Health*.



*Outer, inner and secret obstacles.* When you offer yourself as a servant to the Supreme Field of Merit, you not only gain merit, but also protection from inner, outer, and secret obstacles. Outer obstacles are illnesses and one's needs not being met, not getting what one wants, *etc.* Inner obstacles are the delusions. Secret obstacles are anything that obstructs the energies in the channels from flowing smoothly, and also any lack of smoothness in the channels themselves. It is almost like joining a club or a company; it extends the facilities and one gains the rights and privileges that go with membership.

### Renewing the vows – optional

At this point in the *Lama Chöpa* you can take the common and the uncommon vows, though it is not absolutely required. If you read the *Lama Chöpa* straight forward, you don't have the vows right now. If there is time you can go through the vows and commitments. If there is no time, just go straight through to the purification. We should know that quality of the Tibetan Buddhist practice. We have to know how to do the practice as short as an inch, but also how to do it as long as a mile. That has to be flexible. If you can't do that, you don't know anything about that practice. Taking vows here in that form does not rejuvenate them. However, it does have some power of purifying broken vows. It helps to rejuvenate them a little bit and also helps to remember what they are. That is why the taking of the vows is even available in the *Long Six Session Yoga*. In the *Short Six Session Yoga*, if you don't take the vows one by one, you just summarize the whole thing in one verse:

And I vow to protect all the vows I have taken  
Nor transgress even one for the sake of my life.

*Refuge vow.* First comes the refuge vow. I'm not saying you should do it; in the longer version of the *Lama Chöpa* it comes here, so you *can* do it. Of course, I am not going to talk about the refuge vow, you know it. You can use the formula *Kun chok sum...* that we use it in the long Vajrayogini sadhana. Don't try to make a distinction between Mahayana refuge and Vajrayana refuge; the difference between Mahayana refuge and the usual refuge is compassion.

*konchok sum la dak kyab chi*  
*dikpa tamche so sor shak*  
*drowey ge la je yi rang*  
*sang-gye jangchub yi-kyi sung*

I take refuge in the Three Jewels!  
I confess one by one all sins!  
I rejoice in beings' virtue!  
I embrace the Buddha enlightenment!

Everybody here has the refuge vows and the Bodhisattva vows, and most also have the Vajrayana vows. What makes you lose the refuge vows? Did you raise that question with yourself at any time?

Audience1: Losing faith in the Three Jewels.

Audience2: Killing a human being?

Rinpoche: Killing a human being does not make you lose your refuge vows. One of the commitments of the refuge is this:

I am not going to give up Buddha, Dharma and Sangha even for the sake of my life.

If you break that vow, you lose your refuge. Then you are no longer a Buddhist. That does not mean that you promise not to give it up when you are threatened with being killed. You can say that, but that doesn't really lose it. But if you give it up from your mind, that makes the difference. For example, thinking, 'I am not sure whether Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are reliable or not. Maybe I should do something else', that means you are not trusting a hundred per cent. Your trust is shaky and doubtful, which makes you lose the refuge vows. It is easy to take the vows. But whenever we have difficulties, then we begin to doubt. Gungtang Jampelyang said,

When your stomach is full and you are warm with sunshine, you are a great Dharma practitioner.  
But when you have emotional, physical or mental difficulties, family problems and so on, then you begin to behave worse than somebody who does not even have an object of refuge.

That shows the doubt. Seeking help from a spirit temporarily is okay. But giving up Buddha, Dharma and Sangha by thinking that either they are not capable or that they would not bother with your small problems and therefore going to others for help, is the problem. The double-headed viewpoint, the doubt, that is the point where you lose your refuge vows. Read the refuge section of the *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*. It mentions that very clearly and also quotes directly from Tsongkhapa's *Lamrim Chenmo* where it says that these problems are the cause of losing your vow. That is the only real point where you lose your refuge vows.<sup>343</sup> Even killing someone does not really make you lose them, but it could damage them; you are going against the vows, but you don't lose them.

#### *Bodhisattva vow*

*sang-gye cho dang tsok chok la*  
*jangchub bardu dak kyab chi*  
*rang she don ni rab drub chir*  
*jangchub sem ni kye par gyi*

In Buddha, Dharma, and the Holy Community,  
 I take refuge until enlightenment!  
 To fulfill the aims of self and others,  
 I conceive the spirit of enlightenment!

*jangchub chok-gi sem ni kye gyi ne*  
*semchen tamche dak-gyi dron du nyer*  
*jangchub cho chok yi-wong che par gyi*  
*dro la pen chir sang-gye drupar shok*

Having conceived that spirit of best enlightenment,  
 May I entertain all beings as my guests,  
 May I engage in beautiful best deeds of enlightenment,  
 To help beings, may I attain Buddhahood (3x)

The Bodhisattvas vow is of two kinds, the *wishing* or praying form and the *action*, engaging, or functioning form. The prayer form is simply wishing that all beings might attain the ultimate benefit. The action form is turning your daily activities into actions of a Bodhisattva, doing them for the benefit of all beings and being very awake and aware.

Kyabje Ling Rinpoche showed me a practice, “Forr... the.... be- ne- fit... off.. all be – ings, I amm put-ting my lefft ffoot doown; fforr the be – ne – fit of all be – ings I amm pic – king mmyy rright ffoot up.” Walking this way takes a very long time; they also do prostrations extremely slowly. Kyabje Rinpoche told me that is an awareness meditation. Really true. He quoted the sutra where this is described, and the Mahayana sutra adds, “For the benefit of all beings...” That is walking meditation and the same goes for opening the door, closing the door, sitting, prostration, and even eating, all activities.

Do all this, fine, but have the influence of bodhimind from the beginning. Right at the beginning, you may have to learn it, “I am opening the door for all sentient beings. I am shutting the door for all sentient beings. I sit on the ‘throne’ for the benefit of all sentient beings. Now I act for the benefit of all sentient beings, I take a shower for the benefit of all sentient beings.” Kyabje Ling Rinpoche taught me that. It looks funny. But it is awareness! Awareness and influence of the bodhimind. You bring that awareness and that motivation together in all daily activities, whatever you do. Once you get used to it, you don't have to remind yourself so much, the influence is there, and then it becomes easier.

In Tibet, we used to have an act performed during the prayer festival, where you have to walk very slowly, lifting one leg slowly – like a walking meditation in the Zen tradition. Very irritating.

This message tells us that all activities and daily jobs, if influenced by bodhimind, become Bodhisattva actions. Whether it really benefits all sentient beings or not, with that sort of motivation, with that desire of obtaining enlightenment, with that mind of total dedication, anything whatever that you do becomes a Bodhisattva-action, as long as it is not negative by nature of the action itself. You can't kill for the benefit of all

<sup>343</sup> Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in Our Hands*, vol. II, p. 226; Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in the Palm of Your Our Hand*, p. 428

sentient beings. The *Jatakas* do have a story of Buddha where he killed someone to prevent that person from killing five hundred others, but this is an exceptional case.

*Vajrayana* vow. When you take the Vajrayana vow, what do you do? Take the commitments of the five Buddhas, right?

*sang gye jang chub sem pey kün*  
*dag la gong par dze du söl*  
*dag mi kyö dor je zhe gyi wa*  
*dü di ne ni sung ne ni*

*jang chub nying por chi kyi bar*  
*ji tar dü sum gön po nam*  
*jang chub tu ni nge dze pey*  
*jang chub sem ni la na me*

May all Buddhas with Bodhisattvas,  
 Heroes and Yoginis, please attend on me!  
 I Akshobya Vajra, from this moment,  
 'til I reach the seat of enlightenment,  
 may I conceive the holy, unexcelled  
 spirit of enlightenment,  
 just as the three times Savors  
 became destined for enlightenment.

*dam pa dag gi kye par gyi*  
*tsül trim kyi ni lab pa dang*  
*ge wey chö ni dü pa dang*  
*sem chen dön che tsül trim sum*

*so sor ten por dag gi sung*  
*sang gye chö dang ge dün te*  
*la na me pey kön chog sum*  
*sang gye nal jor le kye pä*

I will uphold firmly all three ethics,  
 That of the vow of restraint,  
 That of achieving virtue,  
 And that of helping beings.  
 I uphold from now on the vow arisen from  
 The **Buddha** yoga about the unexcelled Three Jewels,  
 Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

The Buddha family is Vairochana, who has six commitments: three refuges, Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and the three moralities.<sup>344</sup>

*dhom pa deng ne dag gi sung*  
*dor je rig chog chen po yi*  
*dor je dril bü chak kya yang*  
*yang dag nyi du sung war gyi*

I will truly uphold the Gesture, Vajra and Bell pledges  
 Of the great supreme **Vajra clan**.  
 I will truly uphold the holy Master's pledge.

The great supreme Vajra family is Akshobya, *Mikyö Dorje*, the blue Buddha of the center. From him come four commitments: the vajra or body commitment, the bell or mind or samaya commitment, the mudra commitment, the Vajra Master commitment.

<sup>344</sup> For the three moralities see page 292.

*lo pön dag kyang sung war gyi  
rin chen rig chog chen po yi  
dam tsig yi du ong wa la  
nyen re zhin ni dü druk tu  
jin pa nam zhi tag tu jin*

I will always give the four kinds of gifts  
each day at six times in keeping the delightful vow  
of the great supreme **Jewel Clan**.

This is Buddha Ratnasambhava. Ratna actually means jewel, wish-fulfilling jewel. All wishes are fulfilled through generosity. What are those four types of giving? The generosity of actually giving food, clothes, *etcetera*, the generosity of giving protection from fear, the generosity of giving Dharma, and the generosity of love.

*jang chub chen po le jung wey  
pe mey rig chen dag pa la  
chi dang sang wa theg pa sum  
dam chö so sor sung war gyi*

For the great pure **Lotus Clan** arising from great enlightenment,  
I will uphold each Dharma of the three vehicles:  
Outer, inner and secret pledges.<sup>345</sup>

That is Amitabha Buddha, from whom come three commitments: holding the outer tantric practice of *kriya* and *charya*, holding the secret tantric practice of *yoga* and *maha anu yoga*, and holding the general three-yana practice.

*le kyi rig chog chen po la  
dhom pa tham che den par ni  
yang dag nyi du so sor sung  
chö pey le ni chi nü gyi*

I will uphold truly each every vow I have  
in the great supreme **Karma Clan**, and I will perform  
what I can of ritual offerings.

That is Amoghasiddhi. All the vows taken is one, plus keeping the commitments makes two. These nineteen are the *individual commitments* to the five Buddha families.

*jang chub sem ni la na me  
dam pa dag gi kye par gyi  
sem chen kün gyi dön gyi chir  
dag gi dhom pa ma lü zung*

*ma drel wa nam dag gi drel  
ma dröl wa nam dag gi dröl  
u ma chin pa u yung zhing  
sem chen nya ngen de la gö*

I will conceive the holy unexcelled spirit of enlightenment.  
For the sake of all beings  
I will fully uphold all vows

I will save those not yet saved.  
I will deliver those not yet delivered.  
I will console those not consoled.

<sup>345</sup> The translation of the last two lines of this verse differs from Rinpoche's explanation as well as from most other translations, that say: (*I will individually uphold all Dharma teachings*), *External and Secret and the Three Vehicles*.

I will establish all beings in Nirvana.<sup>346</sup>

When you took the initiation you said, “I’ll do this six times a day, I do that six times a day.” That is why you have the *Six-Session Guru-Yoga*. Whether you do it in deeds or not, at least you keep on saying, “I’m doing it, I’m doing it, I’m doing it,” that covers it, and your commitment is unbroken. Here, the thought symbolizes the action.

It is very interesting. Because everybody here is a serious practitioner I might as well tell this. A broken commitment is really something unfortunate, but if you could not say a sadhana or you forgot it, then I don’t believe you break your commitment. Your commitment really breaks when you say, “I’m not going to do it,” whether for today or not at all. I believe that’s how it works.

Anyway, you fulfill your commitments to the five Buddha families by saying the *Six-Session Yoga* and putting the thoughts on it, or even just saying the words. In the short *Six-Session Yoga*, you have it all in one line, something like “I am upholding all the vows that I’ve taken.” What shorter way than that do you want?

*Commitment of protecting your body.* Then there is a common commitment of the five Buddhas, too: the commitment of protecting your body, the commitment of eating. You eat your meals properly, because your body is important, so precious. It has to be maintained, you cannot insult it, it is not an experimental guinea pig. True. Your body is precious, so it has to be maintained, therefore you have to eat, eat on time, eat healthy. An appropriate amount of unhealthy things that you like might be acceptable, a little bit here and there may be fun, but to overuse, which may harm your body or health, comes in the category of faults.

*Food offering.* Every time when you eat, you make a food offering. When you eat together, as we do here, you make a general food offering together. In that case you don’t make it individually, since that would be insulting the group. If you make an offering individually, it’s not right to make a show of it. Other people should not really know what you are doing.

The best food offering is to do it as an inner tsoh offering, or an inner fire-puja offering. I don’t think you people know that yet. I have not had the opportunity to introduce that. There’s a food offering through Vajrayogini, which Song Rinpoche used to do all the time: all food is offered to the inner Vajrayogini as a fire puja and the fire element or heat within the body will digest it.<sup>347</sup> That is probably the

<sup>346</sup> Alternative translation. *Refuge vow:* I take refuge in the Three Jewels! I confess each and every negativity!

I congratulate all beings on their virtues! I hold as goal!

*Bodhisattva vow:* Until enlightenment I take refuge / in Buddha, Dharma and the Best Community!

I conceive the Spirit of enlightenment / To achieve enlightenment the goals of self and other!

Conceiving the supreme spirit of enlightenment, I wish to receive all beings as my guests!

I shall engage in pleasant highest deeds of love, May I win Buddhahood to help all living beings!

*Vajrayana vow:* All Buddhas and your sons, And all Heroes and Dakinis, Please listen to what I say now.

From this time forth, Until I reach the essence of enlightenment, I whose name is...

May I generate the sacred, unsurpassed mind of enlightenment,

Just as all the Conquerors of the three times, Have assured themselves enlightenment in this way.

From now on I shall maintain the vows, That come from Buddha [family],

The unsurpassed Three Jewels of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

I shall also firmly maintain The three types of moral discipline:

Training in pure discipline, gathering virtuous Dharmas, And benefiting other living beings.

I shall perfectly maintain The vajra, bell, and mudra Of the great supreme Vajra family,

And I shall rely upon my spiritual guide.

I shall observe the pleasing commitments Of the great Ratna family.

Always performing the four types of giving Six times every day.

Concerning the great pure Padma family, Arisen from the great enlightenment,

I shall maintain individually the sacred Dharmas Of the outer, the secret, and the three vehicles.

Concerning the great supreme Karma family, I shall perfectly maintain individually

All the vows that I have taken And make as many offerings as possible.

I shall generate the sacred, unsurpassed mind of enlightenment,

And for the sake of all living beings I shall keep every one of my vows.

I shall deliver those not delivered, Liberate those not liberated,

Give breath to those unable to breathe, And lead all beings to a state beyond sorrow.

<sup>347</sup> See Gehlek Rinpoche, *Vajrayogini Teachings*, ch. x.

best way of making offerings. When they tell you to do a tsoh offering every day, I think many of them do it in that way. Yamantaka might not have it; I don't know.

When I was escaping from Tibet, we reached a monastery where a student of my previous incarnation lived. We had lunch together and later, while he was making a lot of *tsohs*, he told me, "In your previous incarnation you told me I should do the *tsoh* every day. From then until now, I never missed a single day." He probably was doing this practice.

*Vajrayana Downfalls.* Now the downfalls or faults. If you have broken vow or commitment, it is time to purify, and if you have not broken any, rejoice. It is not part of the commitment to do it, but if there is time, it is good to do it. It is the same as in the *Six-Session Yoga*. There you also have lists of all the downfalls. If you don't have the time, you just say that you purify all of them. You probably don't have to worry much about the *pratimoksha* vows<sup>348</sup> anyway, unless a few people who have some *upaseka*<sup>349</sup> vows. Those of you who are in love with the Vajrasattva recitation<sup>350</sup> can do that here, too.

What do you purify? You know that the basis of achieving siddhihood or accomplishments is keeping the commitments, and purifying downfalls or faults on an as-soon-as-possible basis. In order to purify, you need to know what faults you have or do not have. The faults we introduced already are the faults in the nineteen individual commitments of the five Buddhas and the general commitment fault of insulting the body, not caring for your body. Then we have the Vajrayana root faults.<sup>351</sup> There are Bodhisattva root faults and Vajrayana root faults. The Vajrayana downfalls are especially the faults against the *Fifty verses of the Guru Yoga* and the *fourteen root tantric faults*:

*Fifty verses of Guru Yoga*<sup>352</sup>. Audience: These fifty verses have a lot of very specific advice and rules, like not jumping over the shadow of your guru and so on. If you read them, there are a lot of things that we are probably not doing accordingly. How could we incorporate these into our practice and avoid those downfalls? You actually have often discouraged us from doing some of the things that have been observed in the traditional Asian context, like outwardly showing respect to the master. Is it appropriate to do this from our heart, while not doing them outwardly? How should we handle that as your disciples and students?

Rinpoche: These *Fifty verses of Guru Yoga* are about how the disciples are advised to treat their master. I don't call you people disciples or students, I call you friends. That outlook is completely different. However, it is very difficult for me to make a statement about the fifty verses. Under normal circumstances I would say that they are very conservative. But they are written by Tsongkhapa<sup>353</sup>. So I can't really say that. However, I still hold that the mental understanding and attitude is much more important than physical gestures. Particularly here we are in a different culture. If you adopt the old Tibetan culture here, it is not going to be natural at all, but rather superficial and artificial. Some people actually ask me, 'We would like to do prostrations and get up when you come into the room', *etc.* But I am telling them not to. We are in such a culture that I don't think it is going to be helpful at all. In addition to that it may even do a disservice to the whole situation.

I have a very interesting example. It was in the very early days of Jewel Heart, when we were still in Cherry Street. The late Tara Rinpoche was visiting. I had a conversation with him and he said, 'These westerners are so great. Look at them, how tremendously devoted they are!' Tara Rinpoche's visit at that time began in Amherst and ended in Hawaii. About twenty or thirty people were traveling with him the whole time. They paid their own tickets and everything and followed him all the way. So Tara Rinpoche said, 'Our younger Tibetans are not doing that. They think that the Buddhadharma is responsible for the loss of Tibet.' The Tibetan Youth Congress in India was a little bit anti-Dharma at that time. I said, 'Are you sure that these westerners have great devotion?' He said, 'Yes, you can see that.' I saw that two ladies who were among the followers of Tara Rinpoche were slightly bowing down and keeping their

<sup>348</sup> Vows of individual liberation.

<sup>349</sup> Lay vows.

<sup>350</sup> See page 187.

<sup>351</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Tantric Grounds and Paths*, tantric root faults p. 63-67; secondary downfalls and mother tantra commitments p. 67-74.

<sup>352</sup> For the text, see page 357.

<sup>353</sup> The verses itself are ascribed to Asvagosha. Je Tsongkhapa's explanation of it is called *Fulfillment of All Hopes*. A very short commentary on the fifty verses is to be found in Wangchug Dorje, *The Mahamudra eliminating the darkness of ignorance*.

hands folded all the time while he was coming into the teaching room. So I asked one of them, 'What are you doing?' She said, 'Why? Did I make a mistake?' I said, 'No, no, no.' I asked another person, 'What are you doing?' She said, 'He is such a nice guy, so I am making some gesture.' Another lady I asked replied, 'Isn't that the Tibetan system?' In other words, these people have no idea about devotion. They simply perform those gestures because they have been told to do them. They taking out scarves, folding their hands, bowing down and doing all kinds of things, but have no idea what for. Tara Rinpoche actually observed what I was doing and told me later, 'I had no idea. I really thought they were strongly devoted.' It is funny in the west. Some organizers train people. They tell them, 'You have got to stand up, fold your hands this way and keep them folded.' People will do it, because they have been told to do that. Then the Tibetans will interpret that as devotion. But it does not work that way.

In Jewel Heart I especially objected to behaving that way. Just be a good human being and give each other good human treatment. I never used a throne earlier. Now my seat is becoming more like a throne, because somebody added up a few things. I do know who that somebody is. But normally I would not sit on a throne. As far as I am concerned, my idea is to sit on a cushion on the stage so that everybody can see me. Last year Tubten and Loden made me a backrest and painted it and now it looks like a throne. But I had never in mind to sit on a throne. I certainly do not expect people folding hands and bowing down and all this. I try to be simple. I stand with the other retreat participants in the food line. I try to hide among the people. I took a couple of visiting rinpoches with me into the food line. The first time they would stay with me, just to please me. The next time they would say, 'Would you mind if I sent somebody to get me the food?' They didn't want to go.

The point that I am trying to raise is this: By not allowing these external shows of respect and by participating in all these teachings, you develop some kind of kindness or affection or liking. That actually changes into some kind of trust and this is the basis for your guru devotion rather than this artificially imposed show-bizz. In Tsongkhapa's case what he wrote was totally sincere. That is how he treated his gurus. That was the way good old Tibet in the 14<sup>th</sup> century functioned. But times and conditions change. The culture changes. If you keep enforcing these artificial things, I don't know how useful that is. Many western Tibetan Buddhist centers do. Ninety per cent of the people don't know what they are doing. They think they are doing it Tibetan style, and true or not, it becomes show-bizz. That will not be able to establish a fundamental base for spiritual development. The root of all spiritual development, the guru-devotional practice, will not be able to be established through some show-bizz type of functioning.

If you discourage that external show-bizz, the actual appreciation shows out. This is what affects the individual; it helps their lives. Each and every one of you here are not here because somebody else is also here. You are here because this practice makes a difference in your life. It helps you, that is why you are here.

In short, I don't think we can literally follow the fifty verses of guru devotion. I do remember our late Gelong-la. We were walking together through the streets of Singapore. Suddenly he would remember that he was at my right side and started moving to the left hand side. I asked him, 'What are you doing?' He said, 'I am at your wrong side. According to the fifty verses of guru devotion I should be at your left side.' He used to do that sort of thing. Personally, it does not make any difference to me, honestly speaking – as long as you don't beat me! Really, I don't care. What you need is the basis of the guru yoga, because if you don't have that, you are not going to get much development. If you have it, it is good enough. Physical gestures don't count much, particularly in this culture they are not at all suitable. We are trying to establish a Dharma system which is acceptable to the culture here. That is why I take pains to understand this language. I won't say that you can ignore the fifty verses, but that is how it is going to work.

What we have been talking about relates mainly to the first of the fourteen root vows of Vajrayana, which I'm going to talk about now. This and the seventh, the vow of secrecy are very important and are repeatedly mentioned. As part of the initiation ritual<sup>354</sup> it says,

I am your vajra master. You have to follow exactly what I say.  
You must not insult me, for if you do so, you will go to hell.

<sup>354</sup> It comes at the point of rejuvenating the vows. See the Yamantaka self-initiation (transl. R. Thurman), p. 155-156.

This is the most important vajra-master commitment. You drink vajra-nectar and hold the vajra in your hand and make all these commitments. This is because they are important. It does not make a difference to the vajra-master himself.

What about the irreversibility of the vows? It says to keep them as long as space endures. The Vajrayana vows are meant to be kept until full enlightenment. When you die who knows what happens, but that is what it is. In the self-liberation vow system there is a way by which you can give those vows back. But as for the Vajrayana vows there is no system of getting out of them.

#### *The Downfalls of the Fourteen Root Tantric Vows*

1. *Despising or belittling my Guru:* insulting your own Vajra Master.
2. *Disregarding any practice:* breaking Buddha's words.
3. *Speaking badly of my vajra brothers and sisters.* Through the influence of anger, insulting your vajra brothers and sisters, pointing out their faults, not for the purpose of correction but for the purpose of insult. One has to be very careful with that. A lot of people will under the guise of thinking, "I'm helping," in reality hurt the person by pointing out their faults. A good motivation alone is not enough, you need a wise method. You have to point it out in such a way that people may acknowledge rather than reject it.
4. *Abandoning love for any being.* One should never give up love-compassion for all sentient beings.
5. *Giving up wishing and entering bodhicitta.* One should never give up bodhimind.
6. *Scorning the teachings of sutra and tantra.* Never insult another's Dharma practice. Formerly, in Tibet, our teaching tradition would say we were extremely fortunate, more fortunate than any other Dharma practitioners, because, "We have heard, met and encountered the great Tsongkhapa, who taught the perfectly pure Dharma, pure as faultless gold, and that is so rare and fortunate." People had a lot of pride also, a lot of them would say, "Yeah, we are the followers of Tsongkhapa, the others, well....." They would look down on the other traditions, like Sakya, or Kagyu, or Nyingma. You cannot look down on those traditions, because they are also perfect traditions. If you do so, it is a fault. And so is saying Vajrayana is best and insulting the sutra Mahayana, and vice-versa, as well as saying, "I'm a Mahayanist and Hinayana is only....." This is insulting the Dharma of other practitioners and is a fault against this point.
7. *Revealing secrets to those who are unripe.* Vajrayana things cannot be shared with people who are not qualified to hear it. As I said before, the reason is not that there is anything to be kept secret, but if somehow a misconception develops, we get into problems. Probably not only misunderstanding of Vajrayana. Take Nixon. The communist Chinese told Nixon, "We have to take over Tibet, because they are worshippers of evil: look here," and they showed him a Yamantaka picture, and Nixon said, "Okay, go ahead." Probably that's misunderstanding.
8. *Abusing my own aggregates.* You cannot look down on your body, because it is a precious body.
9. *Denying or doubting voidness.*
10. *Remaining close to malevolent people.* You cannot make a judgment that this Guru is good, that one is bad; this is a good Dharma, that is a bad Dharma, because we don't know.
11. *Not recollecting the view of voidness.* You're supposed to remember emptiness six times a day. I think it refers to what is covered in your *Six-Session Yoga*.
12. *Causing someone to lose his faith.* People who come with total faith to you must never be cheated; if you cheat them, you have a downfall.
13. *Not upholding my word of honor.* You have to keep your commitments always.
14. *Despising women.* You can't look down on the female; it is the wisdom nature. Keep total respect.

These are basically the fourteen Vajrayana root vows; and then there are additional ones in the mother tantras. If you have these downfalls or faults against any of the vows that you have taken, then you have to purify it. If they are not there, you rejoice.



*The General Confession*

It might not be a bad idea to introduce one of the purifications here. A common practice is *Thirty-Five Buddhas Purification of Downfalls*<sup>355</sup>, in Tibetan *tung sha*. A shorter version is the *General Purification*, in Tibetan *tri sha*. It may be a good idea to make that available for people.<sup>356</sup>

*Alas! Oh Guru Vajradhara and all the Buddhas abiding in the ten directions, Bodhisattvas and Sangha, please heed me.*

*I, [say your name,] in all my lives from the beginningless beginning until now, being under the power of negative emotions, obsessions, hatred, and ego, have committed the ten negativities by my body speech and mind.*

*I have committed the five major and minor heinous crimes. I have broken my self-liberation vows, my bodhisattva vows and my Vajrayana vows.*

*I have been disrespectful to my parents, abbots, ordination masters and companions. I have done harmful actions to the three jewels, and living beings, abandoned dharma, disparaged sangha and so on.*

*I have accumulated non-virtuous actions and encouraged others, and rejoiced when they did and so forth.*

*In brief, whatever actions may prevent my gaining a better rebirth or liberation and make me take a lesser rebirth and remain in samsara, all this I admit, purify, do not conceal, and reveal before the Buddhas living in the ten directions, such as Guru Vajradhara and the bodhisattvas.*

*In the future I shall refrain from committing negative actions.*

*I will not reach happiness and remain there unless I purify them now.*

That's it. You can make that prayer shorter by not listing the vows and just saying, 'against all vows' and also you can, instead of reading down the whole long list of people deserving of respect, summarize that by saying, 'all respectable people'. In that way you can make and use your own version and most importantly, do the actual purification. The most important to purify are the ten non-virtues, the three by body, the four by speech, and the three by mind, and the five limitless non-virtues. Though there is not so much danger of committing these five, still it is good to recognize and purify them. By naming them you will remember them. Whether you have really done them, or do not remember whether you have done them, it is very important to purify them. So it would be helpful to insert the shortened version here.

Audience: At the beginning of this practice we generated as Yamantaka. So, we are Yamantaka as we're making these offerings. But then, Yamantaka does not have any faults, right?

Rinpoche: When you purify you get out of the Yamantaka suit and get into the John's suit; during the Yamantaka period you can put your beard up and during the John period bring it down.

### 3. Purification<sup>357</sup>

I may not have to go into the purification very much. Most of you are very familiar with the four opponent powers and all this. Therefore we put more time today in recognizing what we have to purify, than how we do it, because that is quite well known to this particular group. I can cover the remainder of the seven limbs quite easily, because it is everywhere, for example in the *Ganden Lha Gyema*.<sup>358</sup>

*Toh mey dhü nay mi ge dhig pay lay*

<sup>355</sup> To be found in Kathleen Mc.Donald, *How to Meditate*, p. 198-202.

<sup>356</sup> Rinpoche first gives the text by heart: "I, ..., from the beginningless time, under the influence of attachment, anger and hatred have committed many negativities. I confess all negativities that I have created with body, mind and speech, the ten negative actions that I have created through the three doors, the five limitless negativities, and any broken vows. I confess any disrespect towards any beings deserving respect like Vajra Masters, parents, elders, Dharma brothers and sisters. I confess anything I might have done to harm the Three Jewels, giving up Dharma, creating divisiveness among the Sangha, and I confess any actions I might have done that harms other beings, whether I have done them or made others do them or rejoiced if others have done them. I confess and promise not to do them again, and I wish to gain happiness."

<sup>357</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 162-165 Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 11-114.

<sup>358</sup> Gehlek Rinpoche, *Ganden Lha Gyema*, p. 39-58.

*gyi dhang gyi tsel yi rang chi chee pa  
thuh je che dhen chan ngar gyö sem kyi  
shah shing lhan cheh mi gyi dhom pa nö*

- st. 32. **All negative actions that I have committed,  
Ordered or rejoiced in from beginningless time,  
I regret and purify in your presence,  
And I resolve to remain alert.**

It starts with *toh mey dhü nay*, from beginningless time. It is beyond our comprehension where it might have begun. From that time up to now, all negativities such as the ten non-virtues, *mi ge*, etc. whether you have done them yourself or made others do it or have rejoiced in non-virtues done by others (that includes the ten non-virtues, five limitless negativities and broken vows), all those you confess.

*Negativities.* There are two categories of negativity: One is the negativity by nature, the other is by virtue of having taken a vow and then broken it. An example for the first one is killing. By nature the action itself is negative. You are hurting and killing someone. An example for the second would be the monks' rule of not eating after noon. If monks do that, it is a negativity, but it is not by nature negative. You and I can eat in the afternoon or evening without accumulating negativity. But the monks do, because they have the vow. They have promised that they won't eat then.

Another example: if you have taken the eight precepts of the Mahayana which are taken for 24 hours, and you eat in the afternoon, you get a downfall. Actually eating after noon is not necessarily right on 12 'o clock noon. You don't have to be that strict. But if you are strict, you are supposed to put a stick in the ground and see if there is no shadow. After that you are not supposed to eat, whether it is 12 noon or not. It depends of course on the area where you are. Midnight in one place is mid-day in another place. It is all relative like that.

Here you are acknowledging all negativities from beginningless time and all types of negativities, those by nature and those by breaking vows. An action which brings negative results is what really is a negative action. In Christian terms it is a sinful act. I usually try to avoid such terms as sin, because it gives some people a different message. Many of us come from the counter-culture of society, or are at least sympathizers and feel comfortable with counter-culture activities. We don't like words like sin, holy and hell and even heaven to some extent. Negativity may be an acceptable term. However, we also should not fall victim to misinformation by avoiding certain terminology. You have to see that one reason why we avoid such terminology is that we don't like it. We just don't like it. We don't like the ways things are done in our culture. So we have a counter-culture. On the other hand we still care to be right. We don't want to be wrong, because then we will be the loser. You can use the term 'negative karma', but in English the correct terminology is actually 'sin'. It may not be the type of sin that is being presented in certain quarters of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. That makes it very uncomfortable for a lot of people. But do remember, although we are using different terminology, it is sin we are talking about. Remember, you don't want to be the loser. And by the time you realize that you are the loser, it is too late.

Then, it is not only possible to accumulate negativity by carrying out these kinds of acts, but also by making others do them. Perhaps you don't exactly order them to do these things, but you could talk them into it. It ends up being the same thing. Then, even if you don't talk people into it, but when you hear about it later, you could rejoice. All of these are included under this negative karma. They almost all fall into the same category. All these things we have to *regret and purify*.

Who are you confessing them to? To the ones who have immeasurable compassion and kindness, that is, the Supreme Field of Merit. They have immeasurable compassion for all beings, so they definitely have compassion for me as well. Why should I be left out?

### *The Four Powers of Purification*

*Power of Regret.* So, in front of them, in their presence, under their eyes, *chan ngar*, with a mind of regret you purify these faults. By generating the regret, you have the power of that antidote. Regret you have to develop yourself. Even if you don't really regret what you are doing, you have to at least think you regret it. Without regret it does not become a good purification. It is very simple: if you don't regret, there is no reason why you should purify, unless you have been told to do that purification, but in that

case it is only a half-hearted purification and you will only get a half-hearted result. So the regret is the key in this.

There are different kinds of regret. You may think that you did something wrong, you think you may not have been fair or whatever reason may come up. Without regret it is simply lip service. That does not even become purification at all. The reason for purification is that one does not like that action one carried out. There may be many reasons for regret. It could be personal reasons, social reasons, general reasons or the reason that one would like to benefit all beings. In any case, regret is the key.

The purification is done *in your presence*. In other words we are calling the Supreme Field of Merit as witnesses to whom we not only express our regret but also to resolve to remain alert. The Supreme Field as a witness is definitely more reliable and valuable and important than your signature on a document signed and sealed in the presence of a public notary.

*Power of Base.* As for the power of base, we have made all the various offerings, we have taken the vows, generated bodhimind, so the power of base is definitely completed.

This power could also be explained as *compensation*. You did something wrong. It is not that you did something wrong and you have to pay for it. That is not a great mentality. It would be a mentality of punishment. ‘You can not let them get away with it’. This is very strong in the American culture. That may be the law of this land. But that is why a lot of the moral issues in this country are not straight forward, but actually very crooked. Of course morality is absolutely important. We have gone through that a lot of times before. I don’t have to revisit that. Purification has to come from within oneself. No one should force anyone else to purify. You can’t, anyway. It comes from within. We really don’t like something we have done and so we want to correct it. Through the regret we develop the desire to correct it. Right or wrong – that is a different issue. Who really knows what is right or wrong?

But if I don’t like something that I did and I would like to correct that, then I need to do something in compensation. *If the persons against whom you did something are enlightened ones, you take refuge to them. If it is non-enlightened ones, you generate love and compassion.* That is the Buddha’s way. It is not so much that you go and talk to the person and ask them for forgiveness. That is a different story altogether. I really don’t think you have to do all that. Some good people will give you forgiveness, whatever it may be, no matter how badly they have been hurt. But not all people are in the same category. Some people will say, ‘Okay, but...’ and then they will bite you back. Some may even tell you that they are not going to forgive, but will hold that grudge. Then what are you going to do? Perhaps you will say, ‘Okay, if you are going to hold it, I am going to hold it too. Lets see who is going to win in the end.’ [laughs] That is not going to contribute towards our purification at all. In the American culture it is automatic. You have to go and seek forgiveness from the person. According to the Buddha that is not necessary.

If you can compensate for the people you have hurt, if there is something you can do, of course by all means, go ahead and do it. But even if you can’t, compassion and love is the key for that part of compensation. That is why every Buddhist practice begins with taking refuge, generating love and compassion, going through the four immeasurables and generating bodhimind.

*Power of Antidote.* Because we have done this before the Supreme Field of Merit, their bliss-void manifests as light and liquid which comes from their bodies, enters your body, purifies it completely. You think that all the non-virtues accumulated at your heart level in the form of darkness are cleared by the light coming from the Supreme Field of Merit. All the negativities are thus cleared in one go. When the sun shines or when you turn on the electric light in a room, the darkness disappears. In that manner your negativities are cleared. By thinking this, you develop the antidote action very strongly.

There is also the method of the Vajrasattva recitation. But you can’t just do it once or seven times or twenty-one times or a hundred times or a thousand times. It should be done a hundred thousand times. That is recommended. And it is even better if you can develop bodhimind along with that. As it says in the *Bodhisattvacaryavatara*,

Besides the bodhimind, which other powerful positive action  
can destroy such powerful negativities?<sup>359</sup>

<sup>359</sup> Shantideva, *A Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life*, Ch. 1, verse 6.

However, it is not sufficient to generate the bodhimind for a few seconds, or five minutes. It is not the idea to meditate on bodhimind for five months or five years, but rather to meditate on bodhimind in such a way that bodhimind actually develops within the individual, no matter how long it takes or how hard you may have to work. Just saying, 'May all beings be free from suffering' will not work. That does not mean that you should not say these verses. They are an attempt at least.

When you say mantras you actually have to say quite a lot. Up to now I did not have to encourage you to say mantras, because Chödrak Rinpoche<sup>360</sup> was there. Directly or indirectly, he encouraged people to say mantras. Now he is gone and I have to do the encouraging. Saying mantras is one of the best ways to purify negativities. It may not just be one round of the mala. You should do it until purification is achieved. So it is not the purpose to say mantras until your mala beads have become flat or until your nails are worn out, but until your negativity is gone. The figure of one hundred thousand is just a high figure that has been picked.

The same goes for meditation on love and compassion. How long do you have to meditate on that? Until all the weapons thrown at you change into flowers.

*Power of non-repetition.* This power is also contained in the purification verse of the Lama Chöpa: *I resolve to remain alert*. What do you want to be alert for? Watching whether mice are coming into the room? No, we want to be alert, so that we don't repeat what we have done. You watch and you are aware. You are careful. In this way you promise not to do it again in future. The power of non-repetition is also very important. It depends on the individual. If you have good understanding of how karma works, the power of non-repetition is easy. You know what it brings and you don't want it. If you don't have a good understanding of karma or if you do, but are not sure about it, if you just superficially accept karma but don't totally rely on it, then your power of non-repetition will be weak. You are not convinced that the unpleasant things happening to us are the results of negativities. If you are not really convinced then your power of non-repetition will be lukewarm.

So, by saying this verse alone, these four lines, the purification can be done completely.

Audience: It is like the saying 'Enjoy the crime, do the time'.

Rinpoche: In that case, the knowledge is there, but you don't really accept it. Then that happens. If you do accept it, you can overpower negative habitual patterns. If you just know it but haven't embraced this knowledge completely, it is not powerful. It takes time. We know that negative actions bring negative results. When we accept it superficially, we change our minds all the time. We go back and forth, give in to temptations and habitual patterns. We do all this for the reason you have just said. We have not properly absorbed the knowledge. We are not submerged in it. We have the basic knowledge but have not fully accepted it. The sign of that is when the emergency happens, we suddenly freak out and do all sorts of funny things. One of the earlier masters said,

When your stomach is filled and you are warmed by sunshine, you look and act like a Dharma practitioner, but when an emergency arises you behave worse than someone who has no knowledge of Dharma.

That's what happens. That's how diabetics pick up a cigarette or a candy bar.

It is also important to read the *Jataka Stories* and the sutra called *The Tales of the Wise and the Foolish*,<sup>361</sup> and also the biographies of the various masters. All this should contribute to helping the individual absorb and embrace the knowledge of karmic results. I don't think that the majority in this group has a problem with the knowledge, but now our problem may be to accept it and merge with it. So pay attention. If your problem is knowledge, then learn. If your problem is embracing the knowledge, then don't spend too much time on learning these particular things but try to absorb it by reading the stories, by observing, by meditating, and thinking. The priority of the individual practitioner is shifting now from learning to absorbing. As long as you are freaking out in emergencies, it is clear you haven't fully absorbed the knowledge. Truly speaking there is nothing to freak out about. What can you do? Accept it the best way you can. That is the least you should be able to do, if not better.

<sup>360</sup> See note 294.

<sup>361</sup> Stanley Frye, *Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish*.

Human life is something wonderful and beautiful, no doubt, but extremely fragile, too. We all know and have to accept that. There is always something. If not this, then something else. It all goes on and every day passes in those circumstances. You have to know how best to accept that, and how to make best use of it.

*What can I do when I am dying?* A number of people have asked me that question. Purification with the four powers is one of the things you can do, because purification makes you pure and departing in the pure state makes you perfect. That's why it is important. But when Vajrayana people want to purify Vajrayana downfalls sometimes it is necessary to perform a self-initiation for yourself, or receive initiation from a teacher, or request someone to do a self-initiation for you.

I might as well share here with you people something that's not easy to talk about in workshops about *Living and Dying* or with a new group of people because people may misunderstand. It is always good to leave a small amount of money for when you will have died, for sangha members or for your teachers or for monasteries or for someone to perform a self-initiation on your behalf during the first seven weeks, once a week and on the 49th day after the death, and maybe again after a year and on the anniversaries. That is quite helpful. It doesn't matter who is going to manage it, but leave it aside. We have sangha groups and they will manage well. I thought it would be good to mention this here.

### *Vajrasattva Practice*

Along with this purification you're supposed to cover here the Vajrasattva practice.<sup>362</sup> The hundred-syllable mantra is:

OM VAJRASATTVA SAMAYA	O great courageous one whose holy mind is the lotus nature
MANU PALAYA	of all Buddhas, and who holds the samaya pledge,
VAJRASATTVA DENOPA	lead me along the path you took to enlightenment,
TISHTA DRIDO ME BHAWA	to be closer to the vajra holy mind.
SUTO KAYO ME BHAWA	Please, remain firm in me.
SUPO KAYO ME BHAWA	Please, be pleased with me.
ANU RAKTO ME BHAWA	May I be in the nature of the highly developed great bliss.
SARWA SIDDHI ME PRAYATCHA	Please, be loving towards me.
SARWA KARMA SUTSA ME	Please, grant me all the actual attainments.
TSITAM SHRIYAM KURU HUNG	Please, grant me all the virtuous actions.
HA HA HA HA HO	Please, grant me your glorious qualities.
BHAGAWAN	[Hung is the seed syllable of vajra mind. Ha ha ha ha ho symbolizes the 5 transcendent wisdoms, the 4 immeasurables, the 4 empowerments, the 4 joys, the 4 kayas]
SARWA TATHAGATA	O blessed one, who has destroyed every obscuration,
VAJRA MA ME MUCHA	attained all realizations and passed beyond suffering,
VAJRA BHAWA	all those who have gone in the space of emptiness 'just as it is',
MAHA SAMAYA SATTVA	do not abandon me. Grant me realization of the lotus nature.
AH HUNG PHAT.	O great courageous one holding the pledge, the samaya-vow,
	make me one with you.

Vajrasattva specializes in purification. We say Manjushri embodies the wisdom of enlightened beings, likewise Vajrasattva embodies the purifying power of all enlightened beings.

When the four powers are completed, no matter how heavy negativities you have, there is no such negativity which cannot be purified. Remember Angulimala's story.<sup>363</sup> Remember the story of the arhat 'Small Road'.<sup>364</sup> Many of the great masters have spiritually developed just by purifying negativities. Purification and accumulation of merit are the two keys. When negativity is reduced, the spiritual development comes automatically, because the positivity of the fact of reduced negativity is building up stronger and stronger. This is your spiritual development. Nothing else. If your spiritual practice is not successful it is because of the obstacles. Purification gets rid of the obstacles. Then your practice works.

<sup>362</sup> Explanation of this practice to be found in Gehlek Rimpoche, *Ganden Lha Gyema*, chapter IV, Gehlek Rimpoche, *Vajrayogini Teachings*, chapter IV, Gehlek Rimpoche, *Solitary Yamantaka Teachings on the Generation Stage*, chapter. II. *Vajrasattva Meditation and Recitation* from Tsongkhapa's *A Book of Three Inspirations*: Glenn H. Mullin, Tsongkhapa's *Six Yogas of Naropa*, p. 227-231. Further literature: Lama Yeshe, *The Tantric Path of Purification*. Picture of Vajrasattva: J. Landaw and A. Weber, *Images of Enlightenment*, plates 17 and 18.

<sup>363</sup> For the full story see: Stanley Frye, *Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish*, ch. 37: *Angulimala or Finger-Necklace*.

<sup>364</sup> See Gehlek Rimpoche, *Lam Rim Teachings*.

In the Gelugpa tradition, it's not that we don't have the hundred thousand prostrations, hundred thousand mandalas, and so forth; all these are there, but we don't put this as priority at the beginning level. At the beginning level, we make it a priority that you should know exactly what you are doing, and then gradually those things are also brought in. Before the *Mahamudra* you're supposed to have four points: refuge-taking, mandala-offering, guru devotion, Vajrasattva offering.<sup>365</sup> You have to touch it here a little bit. Basically, you also have the Vajrasattva teachings in Yamantaka as well as in Vajrayogini. The Vajrasattva practice is one of the great paths of the purification. By doing purification here, you are also completing one of the *ngondros* or preliminaries of the Mahamudra.

On each one of these seven limbs here, since it is the basis of guru-yoga, you add:

How wonderful if I could do so. May I be blessed to be able to do this.

#### 4. Rejoicing<sup>366</sup>

*Chö nam rang zhin tsen ma dhang drel yang  
mi lam ji zhin kye phak tham chay kyi  
dhe ga chir yang char wei nam kar la  
dhah chah sam pa thak pe yi rang ngo.*

st. 33. **In nature, phenomena have no sign of inherent existence.  
I rejoice from my heart in the dream-like virtues  
That bring happiness and joy  
To ordinary and extraordinary beings.**

Even for rejoicing, the most beneficial thing is the wisdom. You rejoice from the angle of emptiness, using emptiness as a means. Basically the practice relies on two things: Wisdom and Method or Wisdom and Compassion. That's it. Everything branches out of these two: images, Yidams, sadhanas, practice, mantras, protectors – everything. Bottom line, bare bones are these two, Wisdom and Method. Method is love, compassion, purification, and all of those. And even though rejoicing belongs to the Method part, using Wisdom here is much more beneficial, and much more effective.

*Chö nam rang zhin* is the nature of reality. *Chö* here means 'phenomena'; that means all existence. *Tsen ma* means sign; *dhang drel yang* means no inherent existence whether virtuous or non-virtuous, no inherent existence of positive karma, no inherent existence of negative karma. Whatever exists is free, *drel*, of inherent existence. However, everything does exist in a relative way, with a dependent nature. We perceive it from our dualistic point of view. Phenomena exist dependent on their parts, labels, names, on the perceiver, *etc.* If one of these is missing, the object is no longer there. It is very simple. If you have a bow and break it in half, it is no longer a bow. There is only half a bow there, a part is missing. That is the clear sign that it exists dependently. By knowing that something exists dependently, you should know that it does not exist independently.

If you look carefully, every phenomenon does have the sign of non-inherent existence. Just look at the way we are. That will tell you that we are not inherently existent. We have got this ache and that ache, this pain and that pain; this is broken and there is a bandage and so on. These are all signs that we are not inherently existent. If we did have inherent existence, why put make-up on? On what? Why put on moisturizer? Inherent existence does not get dry! Not only are these signs that we are free of inherent existence, there are plenty of signs of non-inherent existence.

Although there is no inherent existence we function as if we were strongly inherently existent. But everything is just like a dream or a magician's show. Not only we, ordinary people, but even the arhats, the extraordinary beings, perceive joy and misery and function the same way as we do – just like a dream, like a magician's show.

<sup>365</sup> The four great preparatory practices (Tib. *ngondro*) for Mahamudra have 100,000 each. Guru-devotion here means 100,000 Migtsema within *Ganden Lha Gyema* or *Lama Chöpa*.

<sup>366</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 165-169. Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 114.

*Mi lam*, it is just like a dream. You know, in a dream you do all sorts of things. Does it really happen? No. But when you wake up, you feel the effects: you are happy, you are sad, you have developed doubts, you cry. So, the effects of the dream remain after you wake up. Likewise, there is no inherent existence of positive or negative, but you still experience the effects: from positive karma you get enjoyable effects, from negative karma you get suffering. The example used in this commentary is a very juicy one:

When you dream that you have a good relationship with your companion, actually nothing has happened, but when you wake up you still have the happy and joyful feelings and nobody can stop that! Likewise in absolute reality, negative and positive does not really exist; whatever you accumulated is already past tense, however the results of it will make a difference to one's future life and nobody can stop that!

As a matter of fact, things exist in a dream-like manner. And still, we function, and everything works. If you dream in the night that you are going to the bathroom you will make your bed wet. It is a dream but it happens. You cannot rely on dreams, yet dreams function and have effects. They can make you upset, worried, or happy. They fulfill a purpose. If looking back today you think about what happened last year or some years before or in your childhood, what is the difference between that and a dream?

So, the dream is here used as a metaphor: all existence functions like a dream. We don't acknowledge that but hold on to reality too tightly. We refuse to acknowledge that our existence is like a dream, except when we are literally hallucinating and wonder whether it is really happening or is just our imagination.

So, not only do phenomena not have inherent existence, there's not even *a sign* of inherent existence anywhere, but still it functions – like a dream. We are having a long dream of sixty or seventy years. And we have dreams within the dream. That is exactly what it is. When you go and you look at what you dreamt last night and what life you had, looking back it'll be exactly the same – that is, *if* you remember... Things that have really happened to you in this life, but maybe have left nothing but a vague memory, will make you wonder, “Did I dream that or did it really happen?” Our material gains and losses are like in a dream; when it's over it's all gone. But the karmic gains and losses go with us. That is why I like to rejoice in the great activities of great people so I have something to carry even though I wake up.

*Importance of Rejoice.* Here, you rejoice in the dream-like virtues of *kye* and *phak*, that means ordinary and extraordinary people. (Extraordinary refers to Buddhas, Arya Bodhisattvas, pratyeka and shravaka Arhats. Everyone else is an ordinary person.) Their actions function just like a dream. Whatever happiness any of them have is the result of the good work they have done. I acknowledge that and I rejoice in their good work.<sup>367</sup> The last line [in Tibetan] means we should rejoice with a pure mind, a mind free of ego-grasping. You have to avoid ego-grasping and pride, because you are rejoicing in your own virtues, too.

Rejoicing is extremely important. If you rejoice you get much more benefit and profit than as if we get jealous. If we get jealous, we get no profit, but we lose a lot of positive virtue. By rejoicing we gain a lot of positive virtue and we lose nothing. At the most our ego is getting a little hurt. It may feel left out. Otherwise there is nothing to lose and a lot to gain. As Tsongkhapa said, this is the easiest method for accumulating a lot of merit. He made special reference to that in his song *Destiny Fulfilled*.<sup>368</sup> You can sit and keep on rejoicing all the time. That accumulates a tremendous amount of merit. You can rejoice in the activities of the enlightened beings as well as the non-enlightened beings you come across. The benefit you get from rejoicing in the activities of the non-enlightened beings might be less but it is still good to do that too, because the non-enlightened beings are at least equally kind and compassionate to us. Without the non-enlightened beings, you cannot cultivate compassion since you cannot generate compassion for enlightened beings. Without compassion there is no bodhimind and without bodhimind you cannot become a Buddha. Therefore we are dependent equally on the non-enlightened beings. So it is also very important to rejoice in their virtuous activities. You also should rejoice in your own virtues,

<sup>367</sup> In the 2001 spring retreat teachings Rimpoche's spontaneous translation was, “And I rejoice from my heart in the virtues of ordinary and extra-ordinary beings...” which is in accord with the explanation.

<sup>368</sup> Tib. *Dun leg ma*. Translation in R. Thurman, *Life and Teachings of Tsongkhapa*, p. 40-46.

those of the past and those that you will possibly generate in future and whatever you are generating presently.

I rejoice in the dreamlike great deeds of those great people. How wonderful it would be if I could accumulate as much merit those beings do all the time. I hope it will happen. May I be blessed to be able to do this.

I think that is enough. We talked a lot earlier, in the *Ganden Lha Gyema*,<sup>369</sup> about the benefits you get from rejoicing. One thing I must say, *Ganden Lha Gyema* and *Lama Chöpa* are very similar. The *Lama Chöpa* has always been Vajrayana in orientation; that is why it includes all those different offerings and *tsoh* offering. The *Ganden Lha Gyema* was originally pure Sutrayana, but later on little bits of Vajrayana were added. When you go into the secret *Ganden Lha Gyema* teachings, it has become a combination of sutra and tantra. Then the only difference between these two is the lineage: the *Ganden Lha Gyema* comes from the *se gyu* tradition and the *Lama Chöpa* from the *ensa nying gyu* tradition, through Gyalwa Ensapa, who was similar to Milarepa. I talked about him earlier.<sup>370</sup>

## 5. Requesting the Teachings<sup>371</sup>

*Phül jung kyen tse chu dzin bum trik te  
tha yey dro dhi phen dhe kun dei tsel  
kye dhang yün du nay dang pel wei chir  
zap gye chö kyî char pa wap tu söl*

st. 34. **From myriad clouds of your knowledge and love,  
Please shower vast and profound Dharma  
To grow, sustain and prosper a moon flower garden  
Of benefit and bliss for limitless beings.**

It is important always to make requests for teaching. The reason is that if you do so you *will* receive teaching at times when you really need it. There's also another reason. If you wouldn't make a request than nobody would give you teaching. That's the normal system. The teachers are even told not to volunteer to teach. They are told only to do so when requested. A volunteering teacher is not a very good sign. "I'd like to give you this teaching, I like to give you that teaching" is not good behavior at all. So if anybody tries to volunteer to give you this or that teaching, be very cautious! No good teacher should volunteer to give you this or that teaching, unless it has been requested.

We also use this verse during the mandala offering, before receiving teachings.<sup>372</sup> In the commentary, it says that at this point you offer a thousand-spoked golden chakra to the Field of Merit. It is also recommended to offer a conch shell.

During Buddha's lifetime this became a practice of his followers. When Buddha first attained enlightenment, he decided to keep quiet. Then Brahma and Indra appeared and offered a thousand-spoked golden chakra and a conch shell to Buddha and requested him to share his experiences. In order to correspond with this you can visualize that you are offering either one or both of these things.

*Phül jung* means best, *kyen* means knowledge and *tse* is compassion. What kind of knowledge is meant here? It is the knowledge to be shared with people, suitable to their understanding. As a teacher you need to know the subject, sure, but you also need skill in how to present it to people. It has to be suitable for them. You cannot go on and tell fairy-tale stories, nor can you give profound teachings which nobody will understand. You have to have the skill to get the message across in a manner suitable to the audience. That is very important. Otherwise, no matter how learned you may be, if your presentation does not suit the people you are talking to, it won't work. People do that. They attend great teach-

<sup>369</sup> Gehlek Rimpoche, *Ganden Lha Gyema*, chapter IV.

<sup>370</sup> See page 19.

<sup>371</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 169. Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 115.

<sup>372</sup> In a mandala offering before receiving teaching, after the verse *Sa zhi pö kyî*, one adds up the verse *Je tsün Lama dam pa kye nam kyî* from the *Ganden Lha Gyema* or this verse.



ings given by great lamas and afterwards they say that it was very nice and wonderful, but they did not get much out of it. It happens all the time. Teachings should not be too much and not too little.

In our case, if we had more time at our disposal, we would give teachings in short sessions. That really helps people a lot. The message that you convey in a short period like 20 minutes, half an hour or 45 minutes makes a tremendous impact. It is much better than talking for hour after hour. If you are limited in time and conditions you have to do long sessions and give the teachings quickly, but otherwise the first method is better.

Compassion is the other part of the request to teach. Knowledge and compassion together is *kyen tse*. These two things are presented here in a poetic way as a cloud that fills all space. *Tha yey* means countless, *drowa* means beings. We talked about *phen dhe*, temporary and ultimate happiness, last night.<sup>373</sup> *Kun dei tsel* is the flower garden which represents temporary and permanent joy. What this garden needs is rain in order to grow and flourish. A garden needs heat, water, soil and moisture in order to be sustained and to grow fruit. This shower of Dharma teachings coming from the clouds of knowledge and compassion is profound and vast. You need profound teachings, not shallow ones, and you need vast teachings because you don't want to stick to some small little thing, because that would be incomplete. This is what you request.

### Visualization

You visualize as many duplicates of yourself as you can, some carrying a conch shell and some a dharma chakra. Then you offer these conch shells and dharma chakras to Lama Vajradhara, and you make the following request:

All good and wonderful things depend on positive karma. Development of positive karma depends on knowledge as well as practice. Thus, all good and wonderful things come from Dharma, and therefore Dharma is the only source which gives benefit to all sentient beings. Dharma depends on the Dharma practitioners; Dharma practitioners depend on Dharma information, Dharma teachings and the continuation of the lineage.

Therefore, I ask Lama Vajradhara to give continuous teachings of the profound and vast Dharma.

After offering, you think Lama Vajradhara has accepted your request.

## 6. Requesting to Remain<sup>374</sup>

In case you are offering a long-life prayer, a longevity tsoh for the Lama or anybody, you do the tsoh offering at this point, *before* saying this verse. So when you see tsoh offerings done at different places, don't think it is a mistake, it depends on the purpose.<sup>375</sup>

*Dor jei ku la kye chi mi nga yang  
zung juk wang gi gyal pö za ma tok  
dhah chah mö pa ji zhin si thei bar  
nya ngen mi dha tak par zhuh zu söl*

st. 35. **Though your vajra body knows neither birth nor death,  
Please stay here to help me,  
Manifesting the ultimate union,  
Without entering nirvana until samsara's end.**

This is also a verse that can be used in the mandala offering,<sup>376</sup> but after the teaching, at the end.

*Dorje ku*<sup>377</sup> is the vajra body. Dorje means indestructible. Indestructible means permanent. So the vajra body is permanent. It is very similar to the statement *there is no coming and going*. This vajra body *knows neither birth nor death*. It is always there. What does life consist of? The body consists of energy

<sup>373</sup> See page 136.

<sup>374</sup> You ask for the emanation-body not to pass away. Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 169-170. Dalai Lama, *Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 115-116.

<sup>375</sup> If a longevity tsoh for the Lama is done here, the following verse should be said three times. Also see note 332 on p. 168.

<sup>376</sup> In a mandala offering after the teaching usually after the verse *Sa shi pö kyi* the verse *Je tsün Lama ku tse rap ten ching* from the Short Lamrim dedication is added.

<sup>377</sup> The Tibetan *ku* is the same as the Sanskrit *kaya*.

and physical form. There is contaminated and uncontaminated energy. We are not aware of uncontaminated energy at all. This grows within the individual at the time when we transform the negative emotions.

Basically, emotions are not bad. The negative ones are, but the positive emotions are sometimes very good and useful. The negative emotions are to be replaced by positive ones and that really depends on knowing the truth. The closer you get to the truth, the more negative emotions are reduced and replaced by positive ones. That is where the transition really happens.

When the positive emotions have totally taken over and the negative ones have been eliminated, the change from contaminated to uncontaminated takes place. Although we tell you that knowing the truth and emptiness is the point, and that the *aryas* have this and the ordinary people have that, the line is really drawn when negative emotions are totally replaced by positive ones. Then uncontaminated energies have taken over the contaminated ones. Basically the traditional Tibetan teachings call the uncontaminated energies the five rainbow-colored airs, *lung osel nga*. They are actually free of the five negative emotions, free of the five skandhas, and they are the basis of the five wisdoms. That's why they are called the five rainbow-light-nature airs, but they are energies. When you have those five energies, they will pick up the illusion body. These energies are actually clear light. There are a lot of divisions in the clear light, but this is clear light, and this picks up the uncontaminated physical form which is called illusion body. That pure illusion body is the actual vajra body or *dorje ku*. That vajra body has no birth and death, *kye chi mi nga yang*, it has no such a thing called dying, aging, decaying, rebirth, mature or immature *etc.* Therefore, Manjushri is the eternal youth, remaining for eons at the age of sixteen.

Audience: And then what?

Rinpoche: The question of 'then' does not rise. Don't be afraid you will get bored. The question of getting bored does not rise at all. It is the wonderful level one would like to be, not getting any younger nor any older; the right age.

Audience: The universal age; the ideal model. At the age of sixteen you can sit crossed-legged for a long time.

Rinpoche: Yes, that is right; youthful, fresh, physically well conditioned, *etc.*

In the second line, the text refers to the *zung juk*. That is the union. The vajra body has no birth or death, but there is the union of the outer physical body and the inner mind, which is referred to as precious jewel. The vessel or the form, the physical structure, is the *za ma tok*. You see in the *Lama Chöpa* thangka that where Atisha is, a pot is drawn. That is the *za ma tok*, the pot in which you put your precious food. When you are hungry, gold can do nothing for you, food that you can eat becomes precious in this case, so it is relative. The physical structure of the external ordinary human form, the physical identity, is the *za ma tok*, the vessel in which you put the combination of the body and mind.<sup>378</sup> That becomes the *zung juk wang gi gyelpo*,<sup>379</sup> which is another word for rinpoche. Then you request that to remain as long as needed, suitable to our interests and way of life. *Mo* is whatever we like, with hair or without hair, whatever it may be. [Rinpoche had completely shaved off his hair just before this retreat]. You request this form to remain until the end of samsara, and you think that the request has been accepted. Actually, in the Tibetan it says 'remain without entering nirvana, always'. It doesn't say 'until samsara ends'.

### Visualization

You manifest millions of replicas of yourself. They all offer a very impressive, very comfortable, big throne. It has to be a vajra throne, because the vajra represents the indestructible. You dissolve this throne into the throne you have already visualized before.

You also offer a life vase and bowls, *etc.*, which will dissolve into the begging bowl in the hands of Lama Tubwang Dorjechang.

Making requests for the lama to live forever is actually, as Rilbur Rinpoche also mentioned here recently, one of the best ways to have the cause for longevity.

<sup>378</sup> Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 170: For us the vajra body is invisible and so the spiritual guide manifests the outer form of the emanation body that presently appears to us. We can think of this body as like a jewelry box and our spiritual guide's actual vajra body as like a precious jewel inside.

<sup>379</sup> In the translation of Geshe Kelsang Gyatso: king of union.

*Longevity Puja [tenzhuk]*<sup>380</sup>

Let me explain a little bit what will be going on at a more extensive long-life puja for the Guru. The Dakinis of the five Dhyani Buddhas will come from the different directions, in different colored costumes holding bell and vajra. They are the representatives who invite the Vajra Master to go to the pure land. So the practitioners make offerings to the Dakinis and say, “Don’t take him away.” Each different Dakini has her own color scarf, which is put under the throne so that they can lift the throne and go up to the Dakini-land. However the Vajra Master who is leading the tsoh-offering, will come with a sword, cut the scarves, and make offerings to the Dakinis saying, “Don’t take the spiritual guide this time, we’ll give you a gift of tsoh.” At the same time, requests for protection and help are made. That is the first part.

There is a Dakini dance too; if we had had time we could have learned it, but it isn’t possible now. One important thing is, once they agree not to take the spiritual guide away and to help and protect and accept their gifts, each one has to leave in her own direction without looking back and without dancing around; that would be a bad omen. After that, the dancers change their costumes and come back and sit wherever they want.

Then there are different offerings: offering of the throne, the different robes, like the three monk’s robes, the hat, the begging bowl and all this.

Next is the sadhana and ritual of Buddha Amitayus.<sup>381</sup> And in between, you [can] have many other offerings, tormas offerings, long-life pill offerings, long-life nectar offerings, and so on. The complete lineage prayers have to be said, and there is a prayer asking the Guru to remain, accompanied by the eight auspicious signs and the seven precious materials of a king<sup>382</sup>.

**7. Dedication**

*De tar trün pai nam kar ge way tsoh  
ka drin sum dhen je tsün la ma yi  
tse rap kün tu dral me je dzin ching  
zung juk dor je chang wang thop chir ngo*

- st. 36. **I dedicate the positive fortune here created  
To being cared for in life after life  
By my precious Lama, kind in three ways,  
So that I may attain the perfect union of Dorje Chang.**

Now you dedicate your virtues from this particular practice and all other virtues from the past, present, and future, to being cared for throughout your lives by your supreme root Guru who has the three kindnesses. *Je dzin* means to be accepted happily, joyfully, also translated by ‘protected’ or ‘loving care.’ You pray that there may not be any separation until one reaches the ultimate state of Buddha Vajradhara.

*Meditation*

Lama Vajradhara, please hold me, take me almost as if I am blindfolded on whatever paths you have followed. Lead me on the steps that you have taken to total enlightenment.

The dedication should have the influence of bodhimind.

I and all mother sentient beings wish to obtain total enlightenment within this lifetime. May we be blessed to be able to achieve this, by practicing this particular yoga, its preliminary, actual, and conclusion level, and by all other good activities, all positive karma accumulated by myself and others in past, present and future.

And in *Lama Chöpa*, you always have to bring in emptiness too:

Though there is no inherent existence, as things combine together, results materialize and actions have effects. Therefore, I dedicate all this in general for all positive results and in particular

<sup>380</sup> The text is available in Tibetan. English translation unknown. There is a German translation by Tibetisches Zentrum Hamburg, *Bitte um Festes Verweilen mit Gebet an die Dakinis in Verbindung mit dem Ritual der Guru-Puja*.

<sup>381</sup> Picture of Buddha Amitayus: J. Landaw and A. Weber, *Images of Enlightenment*, plate 13.

<sup>382</sup> See note 316 on p. 157

so that all sentient beings especially my circle, my connections and myself, will have a continuous connection with you, great Buddha Vajradhara, life after life.

Thus we have completed the seven limbs, an extremely important practice. You now know many versions of the seven limbs: one in the *Ganden Lha Gyema*, one in the *Lama Chöpa*, and a very short one in just one verse<sup>383</sup>. You can even just say, “I practice the seven limbs,” if you can think that there are seven there, it is okay. This should be the essence of practice for our lay practitioners level; lay not in the sense of ordained and not ordained, but in the sense of beginners and professionals. We are not professionals yet. I hate to say we are beginners, year after year, but at this level the seven limbs are very important and should be our major practice for the accumulation of merit and purification.

### Short review of the Seven Limbs

Most of you are very familiar with the seven limbs.<sup>384</sup> It also comes as a preliminary of the Lamrim. During the *prostration* verses you praise the Supreme Field of Merit and seek their qualities.

*Generosity.* Then you make mentally created and actually arranged *offerings*. Offering is very important. It is an act of generosity. One good thing in the west is that we don’t need to emphasize how good generosity is, because everybody seems to know that it is something good to do. People do enjoy and appreciate it. The best generosity of course depends on to whom you offer, what you offer, why you offer, how you offer and with what view you offer. The object you offer to is the Supreme Field of Merit. How do you offer? Without any hesitation and any attachment. Why do you offer? To benefit oneself and all other sentient beings. The view is the emptiness point of view united with the view of compassion. The object of the offering, the subject of the offering and the act of offering itself – all are in the nature of emptiness. Each and every action brings joy and bliss, the combination of ultimate love and compassion, in the individuals you are offering to, in the giver and in whoever is observing that, in other words everybody.

Then, when you are generous, the need of the object of offering is very important. In the Asian cultures we have a big problem with that. The gurus and the temples receive tremendous amounts of gifts. The schools and hospitals, on the other hand are literally left dry. In the Christian tradition we have a tremendous contribution towards this. We should definitely admire and follow that. In Asia it is held that to whom you give makes the biggest difference. You can see that people throw so many gold pieces into those temples. They throw twenty, thirty or forty of them. Then one little saddhu with a bell goes round and collects them all. It is the same with the Buddhist monasteries and gurus. They all have that problem.

If you happen to become a guru and receive all these things you have to be careful. It is great to get all these gifts, but you have to remember that all of that comes under what we call *kor*. It is not that easy to swallow. The first line in the Lojong text *Wheel of Sharp Weapons*, it says there that peacocks are able to digest poison, and not only that, It helps them to grow beautiful, colorful feathers. Then it says that crows can’t do that. If they want to copy the peacocks they will die.

So if you are the receiver of such gifts you have to be sure that you can digest them and also benefit the giver too. That comes as a package. If the giver is not benefited, then it totally becomes poison for you. If you are lucky, poisonous food will make you run to the toilet a lot, if you not lucky you get more problems. This is just like that.

From the individual making the offering is an act of generosity. You should therefore not offer the yellow part of the vegetables and not the blue part of the butter. There are some people who say, ‘I like to give you some veggies, because otherwise they are going to go bad.’ That is not generosity. That may be an act of not wasting. I have no argument with that, but it is not generosity. In one sense not wasting is good, but sometimes it could be attachment.

Generosity is not limited to things and goods, but you can be generous also with your time, with thoughts and ideas. It is one of the best ways of cutting attachment. The idea and the thought of giving and the dedication are all part of generosity, not just the physical giving of things.

<sup>383</sup> See note 384.

<sup>384</sup> The short version, which can be sung: “I bow down in body, speech and mind. I offer the best I have to give, both real and imagined, to fill the space between us. I regret and purify all transgressions. I rejoice in all virtues. I request you to remain until total enlightenment. I request wise and compassionate guidance. I dedicate my merit for the sake of all beings.”

All the seven limbs have been done on the basis of the Supreme Field of Merit. While doing that, remember the kindness and compassion the Supreme Field has provided to us. They are not only giving us ideas, teachings and guidance, but they help just by being there. Then, with that in mind, say those verses and meditate on them until your mind feels very strong appreciation. In the teachings it will say *until the hairs stand up on your body and until tears come to your eyes*. That should also not be a temporary, hairy appreciation, but has to be solid, particularly requesting the continuation of the activities of Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang until we become totally enlightened, until we become part of him. Also remind yourself of and appreciate all the information we have received, are receiving and will receive in the future, until you are deeply moved.

In that frame of mind we should then say the *Migtsema mantra*.



## V MAKING REQUESTS

*Samsaric gods and demigods, Indra, Brahma and the rest, who have benefited from the teachings on non-violence given by Buddha, and all those who see the Dharma as a source of joy, are invited here to stay above in space.*

*May the teachings be received in everyone's own language, so that samsaric gods can hear it in their language, nagas, rakshas, and yakshas in their languages, and human beings in whatever language they need.*

Do kindly generate a pure motivation:

I generate the motivation to obtain enlightenment within this very life, to benefit all those who have great need, and all those to whom I am in debt.

I must benefit them as quickly as possible. Therefore, I need to obtain enlightenment as quickly as possible. For that reason, I want to put in every effort, to use every bit of time available throughout my life, and particularly during this coming wonderful year.

At this moment we are celebrating the New Year in a beautiful winter wonderland. The freshness of the area is almost like a pure land. Beginning in this way, we wish to have a wonderful, healthy, and prosperous year, both spiritually and materially. Physically, mentally, and emotionally happy, joyful, and blissful.

With all this, we begin the New Year. Once again I wish you a very, very happy New Year. And just as we begin, we also hope to continue throughout the year, both spiritually and materially. Do not leave one of these two out; you have to walk on two legs! That is important, really. A number of us think that there is something wrong in looking after the material part, and that is not right! It is also very nice that we begin this New Year with the bliss-void combination.

We are sitting in the form of Lama Vajradhara, with joyful feelings in both body and mind.

Within this joy and happiness, we generate the bodhimind and particularly the special bodhi-mind of this practice: actually visiting every realm, and emptying it.<sup>385</sup> Not only do we relieve the sufferings and pains of all beings, but we also transform their minds into *Dharmakaya* and their physical appearance into *Rupakaya*. We totally purify all existence. We achieve the wishes of enlightened beings by permanently relieving the sufferings of beings. Not only are their sufferings relieved, but also they become pure beings, pure Buddhas.

Within that joy and happiness we generate the field of merit as Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorje Chang.

Lama Lozang refers to Tsongkhapa, Je Rinpoche, whose ordination name was Lozang Drakpa. In the case of Je Rinpoche, you pick up Lama Lozang, the first part of the name, but for others you don't. For example, for Pabongka Rinpoche you use the name Kyabje Dechen Nyingpo or you say Trinley Gyatso.

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<sup>385</sup> See page 44.

It is not correct to say Pabongka Trinley Gyatso.<sup>386</sup>

### *Pabongka Rinpoche*

In his poetry, Pabongka refers to himself as *Dechen Nyingpo*, ‘the king of bliss from the palace of bliss’, which refers to Heruka. Since then he has been known as Dechen Nyingpo. He has gone beyond the Pabongka lineage. Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche always said that Pabongka Jampa Tenzin Trinley Gyatso was not Pabongka, meaning that he did not belong to the Pabongka reincarnation lineage. He happened to be recognized as that, but otherwise he was the reincarnation-lineage of Changkya Rolpai Dorje, guru of the emperor of China in the 18th century.

Among the great enlightened beings, there is no possibility of their really disliking each other, but somehow, to ordinary appearances, there is always some disagreement going on. That is human nature. Even today we are witnessing that. During Pabongka’s lifetime, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was always (to put it in our ordinary language) looking for a way to catch Pabongka. Pabongka at that time was extremely popular, though not high ranking at all, really a low-ranking person. He didn’t have any *labrang* at all.

In my case, my previous incarnation Tashi Namgyal died as official abbot of Gyuto, while Kyabje Ling Rinpoche was the deputy-abbot. When Tashi Namgyal died, the managers, one of whom was Sonam’s<sup>387</sup> uncle, decided *not* to pick a new incarnation. So, all his possessions were given away. At the end, they took one of his carpets to Pabongka and said, “We began the distribution with you and now with this gift we close down.” But Pabongka insisted that a reincarnation be searched for. One of the managers started crying and prostrating, saying, “If you ask me to jump into the fire or the water I will do so without any hesitation, but please don’t tell me to search for a reincarnation.” When Pabongka asked why, he replied, “For two reasons: first, there are too many reincarnated lamas already, and second, if the lama turns out to be good and helpful to the people, it is of course a source of joy, but if he is wild and crazy, all negativities will fall on my neck.” Pabongka insisted, however, and then the manager said, “I have distributed everything, there are no horses left and no one to go and search throughout Tibet.” Then Pabongka said, “You don’t have to do that, first just look in Lhasa itself.” Still the manager was not convinced, so he went to see another powerful lama, Geshe Samdong Rinpoche, a living Yaman-taka, who agreed with Pabongka. Pabongka said, “When I was young, I had nothing, no wealth at all and on top of that no food to eat. Everybody else had at least a little bag with barley-flour. For several days I couldn’t get any food, so I ran from Sera monastery down to the sand, filled my bag with sand, and put a little barley on top to smell and taste a bit. I lived on that for several days. This is what I did and look what I am today. So don’t worry.” In that way, he refuted every reason they gave. That was Pabongka.

Later Pabongka became very popular. He had a little retreat-area where people from Lhasa lined up to see him every day. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama lived nearby in his summer-palace, but nobody went there because everyone was scared of him. So he said, “Why is everybody going over there? What am I doing here?” And he tried to catch Pabongka in the slightest mistake. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama was very powerful, he had political, economic, military, and spiritual power, all together, but he found this very difficult. Once, when Pabongka went to eastern Tibet, they carried him in a sort of Chinese carriage, a palanquin, since he was huge and couldn’t travel in any other way. When he came back to Lhasa, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama said, “There was a report that you have been traveling in the palanquin, which is only authorized for the Dalai Lama and the regent. Why did you do this?” He called a government meeting and Pabongka had to stand there for twenty days to explain himself. He gave no other explanation than, “Well, people provided it, so I sat down and they carried me.” In the end, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama gave him a punishment: three days of prostration outside the Dalai Lama’s palace, and seven days of prostration at each of the three large monasteries.

Pabongka introduced the southern style of the refuge tree, which he had learned from his teacher Dagpo Lama Rinpoche.<sup>388</sup> The Thirteenth Dalai Lama asked him, “What proof do you have?” He simply said, “It was taught to me by Dagpo Lama Rinpoche.” The Dalai Lama replied, “He was a stupid villag-

<sup>386</sup> Rinpoche remarks that Westerners like to clarify everything and so add the name Pabongka where it should not be done. Among other things the name used depends on the number of syllables in the verse. (For similar reasons, Daggyab Rinpoche when speaking about Gehlek Rinpoche, calls him Nyare Khentul, meaning ‘reincarnation of the abbot of Nyare kamtse’.)

<sup>387</sup> The Sonam working with Rinpoche.

<sup>388</sup> Dagpo Rinpoche Jampel Lhundrup. Dagpo Rinpoche who now lives in Paris has been recognized as his reincarnation.



er<sup>389</sup> gone crazy (Dagpo Lama Rinpoche had passed away already) and you picked that up and made it popular in the Dharma capital. What proof do you have? You are personally responsible for an explanation. If you have something to explain, explain. If you don't have something to explain, you will be subject to prosecution." That was his order.

The order came as usual through a chamberlain and someone else who both happened to be Pabongka's disciples. As they had to do something, they invited Pabongka to the chamberlain's house for lunch. During the lunch they explained the order to him. Pabongka called his manager, told him what His Holiness' order was, and asked him what to do. The manager said to himself, "I knew it. If I don't put a fire under him, he is not going to do anything." He answered Pabongka, "Well, in economic matters I am responsible. This is a Dharma matter. I know nothing about that. It is up to you; you have to reply. If you have anything to say, it is time for you to speak, because they have given you the opportunity to explain. And if you have nothing to say, you have to say, 'I am sorry, I made a mistake. Whatever the punishment is, I will take it. Not only did I make a mistake, my master made a mistake and I am sorry, I have to consider him unfit to be a master'." Pabongka's face turned completely black. He looked at the other managers and they nodded. Then he said, "Do I have to say that Dagpo Lama Rinpoche was wrong?" The manager answered, "Yes, you have to." Then Pabongka said, "I can't say that." "Then you will have to explain." "Okay," Pabongka said, and he asked one of the chamberlain's people to write down what he dictated. Pabongka dictated, "If your Holiness really wants to see an explanation, by the time this letter reaches you, you will be in your room such and such. If you look to your right and count the numbers down, on the third shelf you'll find volume such and such, please take page number so and so and on line seven is quoted these words. Then turn left and you will find book such and such, take page so and so..." The chamberlain took the message, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama read it and said, "At my right take that volume out." Everything was proved right. Then he said, "Forget about the left." Then he asked the chamberlain, "Did you know and tell him I would be in this room?" "No." "Okay, go home, forget about it. No reply."

That was Pabongka's quality. He probably would have said, "Sorry, I made a mistake," but he couldn't say his master had made a mistake. That was Pabongka.

Making requests<sup>390</sup> has five sub-sections:

1. By remembering the advantages and disadvantages;
2. By remembering the qualities of the Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana master;
3. By remembering the kindness;
4. Outer, inner, secret and suchness supplication;
5. Single-pointed request.

## 1. Making Requests by Remembering the Advantages and Disadvantages

I asked Song Rinpoche, "Who do you refer to when you say Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang?" Song Rinpoche told me, "All your teachers, all your masters, in one physical form, some kind of 'lump' (he used the word 'lump') looking like Tsongkhapa with something yellow on his head, that is the object of your refuge, that is your Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang."

That is exactly how it is. Most probably you see the face of your most important teacher and occasionally some other head pops up. In my case, a lot of times Kyabje Ling Rinpoche, then Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche, and sometimes Gomo Rinpoche pops up, sometimes His Holiness, sometimes Lochö Rinpoche and very often Ge Yungtrung Rinpoche, the first teacher that taught me, pops up. In reality, they are all one.

We praise the qualities of Lama Lozang, at his heart level Buddha Shakyamuni, then Buddha Vajradhara, and the deities put on the body (do not forget the deities on the body of the Lama!).

Why do you praise them? You are not buttering them up. You praise them because you admire their qualities, you are inspired and impressed by those qualities. You specifically focus on the pure quality of

<sup>389</sup> Dagpo Rinpoche came from a village in the very southern corner of some remote area.

<sup>390</sup> Literature on this chapter: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 175-193; Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 117-137.

Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang because doing this helps you *develop intelligent faith*. Guru-devotional practice, the root of all development, is rooted in intelligent faith.

The second point, which you find in the Lamrim outlines, is *remembering the kindness and developing respect*. That is not commanded or demanded. Obviously, you have that respect, you like your Supreme Field of Merit, love it, enjoy it; that is why you are doing this!

In the West, Dharma centers often claim individuals, saying, “You have taken refuge with our Lama, therefore you belong to us.” That is not right. You took refuge to be protected from falling into lower realms, you did not take refuge to an exclusive cult-club. You don’t belong to any center. Nobody belongs to anybody. You have to remember that.

We have now reached the focal point. Up to here you have been remembering the qualities of all your spiritual masters, from Buddha onwards to your own root-master. Now, all their qualities are focused on your Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang, which, as Song Rinpoche said, is a Tsongkhapa-like yellow ‘lump’ type of thing. Whatever the face looks like, a man, woman, or child, doesn’t matter.

The only reason why your Supreme Field of Merit wears a monk’s robe is that it is a good omen for you becoming a good *bikshu* or *bikshuni* one life or another. Tsongkhapa put strong emphasis on the monastic order with the proper rules, particularly the vinaya rules, and, of course, ordained monks and nuns have always been very important in Buddha’s tradition, and they represent the absolute sangha. These are the reasons for the robes. Otherwise, it doesn’t matter.

In reality, it is Lama Buddha Vajradhara; Lozang was added because of the link to Tsongkhapa and you add the robes to connect with the great and admirable ordained celibate community. That doesn’t mean everybody has to take ordination or that without it you’re not going to be enlightened. No, enlightenment is an equal right for every human being. Not only does everyone have that right, everyone is eligible, too. When you are an American, you have the right and are eligible to become president of the US, but whether you are qualified or not depends on you. Likewise, every human being has the right to become enlightened, but whether you are qualified or not depends on you. Enlightenment does not depend on celibacy, not at all, but being a celibate is admirable. That is the reason for the monk’s robes.

Admiring the qualities and remembering the kindness, those two together cause profound faith and respect to develop. The essence of it now comes in saying the name mantra.<sup>391</sup>

### *Mandala Offering*

It is suggested to make a mandala offering at this stage, because when you request something you should not go empty-handed. That is the cultural influence again. In the West, if you seek help from someone they will write out a bill and you pay them for it. But in the traditional old style, everything is done for favors. Nobody charges you anything. You have to give something. So, to correspond to that culture, you make the gift of the mandala which is offering the universe, a huge gift. You do the long mandala offering,<sup>392</sup> followed by:

*dag gi chak dang mong sum kye pä yül*  
*dra nyen bar sum lü dang long chö che*  
*phang pa me par bül gyi leg zhe ne*  
*dug sum rang sar dröl war jing gyi lob.*

I offer without any sense of loss  
 the objects that give rise to my attachment, hatred and confusion,  
 my friends, enemies, and strangers, our bodies and enjoyments.  
 Please accept these and bless me  
 to be released directly from the three poisons.  
 IDAM GURU RATNA MANDALAKAM NIRYATAYAMI

### *Threefold Request*<sup>393</sup>

<sup>391</sup> See page 202.

<sup>392</sup> See page 154.

<sup>393</sup> Rinpoche says that the threefold request is part of the elaborate Lama Chöpa and can be inserted here. Not part of the usual text. See also Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 172-173.

Along with that, you already have three important requests.

1. Request to eliminate negativities, from lack of guru-devotion up to dualistic perception.
2. Request to develop realizations from guru-devotional practice up to the realization of emptiness. This is the request for the sutra level. For tantra, you request realizations up to the union.
3. Request for all outer, inner and secret obstacles to be cleared. Here we are referring to conditions such as getting sick, or being unable to complete the practice.

*Guru devotion.* These requests are made very often during the practice, every time you do a mandala offering. They are some kind of pre-supplication prayers. In order to gain realization of guru-devotion, we have to overcome its obstacles like lack of devotion, misunderstanding, and perceiving, acknowledging, and embracing faults.<sup>394</sup> In a tantra, it is said:

Perceive your teacher as having virtues;  
Never perceive him as possessing faults.  
Perceiving virtues brings the attainments;  
Perceiving faults prevents the attainments.<sup>395</sup>

So, Buddha Vajradhara recommended that you not perceive faults, but only perceive good qualities. To the person you're looking at, it does not make a difference what you perceive. But for yourself, when you perceive qualities you will gain qualities, and when you perceive faults you will not gain the completion of your practice and instead gain faults.

This advice about guru-devotion is very important. At the beginning I did not want to share this because it almost seems like brainwashing. I don't want people to misunderstand it. That's why for years we didn't talk much about guru-devotional practice. However, it is absolutely true that without guru-devotion there is no development at all. In this country we have had a number of 'guru trips'. Some of them may have brought something good for some people, but not for society in general. Then, of course, different gurus or teachers have different styles of behavior, which also has not been very helpful to society in general, again. It may have contributed to certain individuals, but not to society. To avoid difficulties of that kind, we have not discussed this subject much. But at some stage we need to share it, otherwise the problem is that year after year, and practice after practice, you people will not gain as much as you should.

Another problem is that, while you may be able to quote from any book, it is just superficial information and you gain nothing, none of your practices will be solid. There are a number of people who are like that. They know something and distribute the information around everywhere. That is not even that bad. But there are others who pick up a lot of information and become totally materialistic. The reason why both types of people don't get much development is their lack of guru-devotion. That's why it is called 'root of all development'. It is also human nature that some people will think, "I made a deal with Vajrayogini directly," or "I have an understanding with Buddha." They may not say it aloud, but they think that way and intensify those thoughts. If you do this, you cannot gain spiritual development. At the beginning level, I have hesitated to mention this, because people tend to misunderstand it totally, but at this time it is necessary to mention it. That's why I quoted this tantra. By looking at the qualities, one gets spiritual development. The Guru is the link between enlightened society and ourselves.

Not only that. When you obtain enlightenment, you do so within the Guru's mind, which is traditionally compared to the throat. Anything coming upwards from within the body, burps, words, thrown up food, shouts, screams, everything, has to come through the throat (unless you let it go the other way out!). If you did not have a throat, all these things could not come out. The throat is a very important junction in the body. Similarly the guru is the link through which you get in touch with the enlightened society. The way how an individual develops is also through the guru, especially when you become enlightened, when you merge your mind with that of the enlightened beings. The doorway, the bridge, the connection to that is the Guru. There is such a vast level of enlightened beings, but it goes through just the guru. In another example, the magnifying glass is the focus through which the sun rays can be collected if you want to start a fire. The guru is like the magnifying glass which intensifies the sun rays and makes them work.

<sup>394</sup> Literature: Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness* p. 117 ff.

<sup>395</sup> *Vajrapani Empowerment Tantra* (Tib. *Lagna dorje wang bskur ba'i rgyud chenpo*).

Audience: The development of the relationship with the guru is a process that grows. But because the lama is in a physical form we have to relate to that physical identity. It is very hard for us to shift away from this visible identity. Of course, having a living lama is a great benefit. But for example, when Chödrak Tulku died<sup>396</sup>, a couple of questions came up. How do we work with what the teacher has to offer in contrast to that neurotic need to be around the teacher? Secondly, if your teacher dies, how do you relate to him then, when he is no longer in physical form and giving teachings?

Rinpoche: When I go, I am gone with the wind. When someone dies there is always the emotional tendency of trying to hold on to them. That is not only in case of somebody like Chödrak Rinpoche who has left us within a short period. (Actually, it was not that short, it took about nine months). The American attitude is very often, 'My companion has died and left me here.' People almost feel like they have been dumped. Many people say that they don't feel settled and have not had a complete closure. I don't know whether that is just the American culture or the whole western culture. In a way it is true. You have an emotional hangover and you are not letting it go. But the closure part of it in my opinion is obvious. Death itself has provided the closure. Death itself is the conclusion – for the dying person as well as for the living person.

Trungpa Rinpoche said to Allen Ginsberg when his father died, 'Let your father go. Please continue the celebration of your life.' These are important words. Letting go is important. There is nothing to hang on, nothing to hold back. The person is gone. Even if you have all the power in the world, you can't hold them back. If we could hold back, we would hold back everybody. But we cannot. One has to realize that. That is nature. In one way we say that death is a beautiful and natural process. In another way it is a harsh reality. It is a harsh cut. Death has drawn the conclusion. The dying person did not die because they didn't like you. People don't like to die, but they do die and then they are dead. It just happens.

You have to understand that we build and maintain a relationship with a person, not with their body. If we wanted a relationship with just a body, we could all just get ourselves Barbie dolls.

What happens to the person at death? There is no longer the physical identity of that person. But there is the mental identity. That can be a one-way stream or a two-way stream. The way it works with enlightened beings is supposed to be a two-way stream. With non-enlightened beings it is a one-way stream. The relationship we really maintain is the mental relationship. The identity you have now is a projected idea of how that person looked. Certainly it is not the look of the person who has just gone. However, our mind is in the habit or in its nature it draws that image. It is not a physical thing. You are dealing with the mental identity.

*Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche passing away.* It is amazing. When Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche passed away it felt strange. When his body was lying down it was a little better. But the day when we cremated him, his body was sat up straight in the sitting position and put on a little platform just outside his room. Then we lifted him up and put him in a palanquin and carried him to the cremation place. The biggest shock for me was that now he was no longer answering back. I could no longer ask any question; no answer came back at all. Not only that, we were carrying him on that palanquin to another platform near the stupa where the cremation was taking place. The body in the upright position would not stay stable. We had to hold it and support it and that was another shock. Such a comfort, such a source of any answer, what had happened to it? I used to ask him everything including how to get married. He used to answer everything and at the end he would say, 'You are asking wrong questions to an old monk!' He did know everything, even about how to get married, about the ceremony, what words are said by everybody, on what basis and so on. He gave me answers on that which would be 40 or 50 pages if I put them in writing. Such a source of all wisdom was suddenly a frozen little piece of meat which couldn't even move by itself.

So I can very well understand what we are talking about here. But that is how it is. It can be very emotional. You can't help it. But you should not be too emotional and at the same time the celebration of your life should go on and you should maintain the relationship through a mental image.

It is important to separate the worldly existence. You have to let it go. Don't hang on. That would also make it difficult for the departing person. In the case of an enlightened mind – like in the case of Chödrak Tulku – there is no problem with the emotional state of the people remaining. We have to draw the line at the point where the consciousness leaves the body and is no longer in a meditative state. Then the body we see is just a piece of matter, almost like another piece of furniture. It has no longer anything to do with the individual except that it used to be their body. The emotional point of hanging on to the

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<sup>396</sup> See note 144

person from that moment on shifts to the mental identity. The body is just a piece of material. To accept it that way is very important.

It was the same with Allen Ginsberg. The moment we noticed that the consciousness had left the body, whatever people wanted to do with the body was okay, burn it, bury it or whatever, it did not matter much. In the case of Chödrak Rinpoche, as long as he was in the meditative state, we were very quiet and respectful and careful. Once the consciousness was gone, I felt different about it.

The benefits of guru-devotion are many. Most important, it is the best purification, the best accumulation of merit, and the quickest way to obtain enlightenment.

The disadvantage of not having guru-devotion is the distance this creates between yourself and your spiritual development. No matter how much you learn, no matter how much you try to meditate, no matter whatever you do, no spiritual development will grow within you. This is the gist of the eight clearly stated disadvantages. So, not only do you not get closer to realizations, you are pushed further away from them. All the information and knowledge you may gain will not contribute to your practice. Now we come to the three requests:

*La ma dang kun chok rinpoche  
nam pa sum la chak tsel zhing kyap su chi o  
kye nam kyi dag gi gyü chin gyi lap tu söl*

*dak dang ma sem chen tam che she nyen la ma gü pa ne sung te  
nang che thop sum gyi nyi nang tra mo bar  
gyi chin chi lok gi lo na ta dag nyur du gak par chin gyi lap tu söl*

*she nyen la gü pa ne mi lob pai zung jug gi bar gyi  
chin chi ma lok pei lo na ta dag de lak tu kye wa chin gyi lap tu söl*

*kyen chi nang gi bar che tham che  
nye bar zhi ba chin gyi lap tu söl.*<sup>397</sup>

I bow down and take refuge to the Guru and the Three Jewels  
Please bless my mindstream.

Please pour down your inspiring blessings upon  
myself and all my mothers,  
so that we may quickly stop all perverse minds,  
from disrespect for our kind teacher to the most subtle dual appearance.

Please pour down your inspiring blessings,  
so that we may quickly generate pure minds,  
from respect for our kind teacher to the supreme mind of union.

Please pour down your inspiring blessings  
to pacify all outer and inner obstructions<sup>398</sup>.

The first three lines says: To the Guru and the Three Jewels I bow down, please help me, take me by hand and guide me. Bless my mindstream.

*Dhah dang ma sem chen tam che*, I and all mother sentient beings. *she nyen lama gupa ne zung te*, take away from us the obstacles to practicing guru-devotional practice such as being disrespectful to the guru by body, mind, or speech. *Nang che thop sum* - those are the white, red and black appearances you have during the dying period, remember? The ordinary *nang che thop sum* comes at the time of death; the extraordinary comes just before you develop total pure clear light, so just before you become totally enlightened. This line means: all dualistic perceptions, from the ordinary level of guru-devotional practice till the subtle level of becoming a Buddha, all dualistic thoughts, *chin chi lok*, which go the opposite or wrong way (this refers to the obstacles), may they be quickly or immediately stopped.

<sup>397</sup> Tibetan needs a check!

<sup>398</sup> Translation of the last three verses taken from Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Joyful Path of Good Fortune*, p. 85.

Then, it talks about increasing the positive; from guru-devotional practice to ultimate Buddhahood, the level of the union of no-more-learning, *mi lob pai zungjug*, may positive thoughts, thoughts that are not crooked, *chin chi ma lok pei lo na ta dag*, quickly develop, *nyur du kye wa*, within me. Then, *kyen* means conditions, *chi nang gi bar che tham che* may all outer, inner and secret obstacles, *nye bar zhi ba* be pacified, not come up.

### *Meditation*

I bow down to the Guru and the Three Jewels. Please help me, take me by the hand and guide me. Please, bless my mindstream.

As all phenomena follow thoughts or mind, wrong thoughts will bring suffering and positive thoughts will bring joy. May all negative thoughts, wrong ideas, wrong concepts, from the guru-devotional practice up to the subtlest dualistic thoughts, that I or other beings have, stop immediately.

May any positive thoughts we have, from guru-devotional practice up to the level of the union of no-more-learning, quickly develop within us.

May any outer, inner, and secret obstacles and their developing conditions be pacified.

### *Requesting by Reciting the Name Mantra*<sup>399</sup>

With these thoughts, you then say the *Migtsemas*. You all know the nine-line *Migtsema*, six-line *Migtsema*, five-line *Migtsema*, and four-line *Migtsema*. The original *Migtsema* had four lines; the others are extended versions. The nine-line *Migtsema* is recommended in *Lama Chöpa* practice, because this is the *Ensa nying gyü* system; it came through Gyelwa Ensapa.

The essence of the *Migtsema* and also the *Mahamudra Lineage Prayer*<sup>400</sup> concerns the advantages and disadvantages of proper or improper guru-devotional practice. This now is the point:

If you fall from a high cliff,  
even though you may think you're not going to fall, you will fall down.  
By the kindness and compassion of the Guru,  
even if you think you're not going to make it to enlightenment, you will make it.<sup>401</sup>

*Examples of guru devotion.* A number of examples are given, funny but good ones. Drom Rinpoche, Atisha's disciple and translator, really did not have time to say his prayers or do much practice. He was always busy with Atisha, who was a very active person, traveling here and there. Though Atisha remained in Tibet for eighteen years, he didn't speak Tibetan; he spoke Bengali, I think. Drom Rinpoche was the only person who could translate for him, he was the bridge between that strange Indian guy and all these wild Tibetans. So Drom Rinpoche was always busy and didn't have time to say his prayers properly or meditate or anything. But his spiritual development was higher than that of Neljorba Gömbowa, who had been doing nothing but meditate. Gömbowa got the idea that he must be the one with the highest development, since Drom Rinpoche was always busy with Atisha and never had time to himself, though he was very learned, and since the cook, Amé, was also busy all the time. One day, Atisha said he needed to compare their levels of spiritual development. Well, forget about Drom Rinpoche, the meditator couldn't even match the level of the cook. When they asked Atisha about it, he quoted the same verse, "If it is done by the kindness of the Guru, you get it, even though you may think you get nothing."

Another example. One of the five great Sakya lamas could not get any development for a number of years. When his uncle, a great master, got very sick, he devoted himself completely to nursing him, day and night, year after year. One day, when he was taking the shit out of the bed, and went down the steps to throw it out, he suddenly began to realize how much development he had.

Keep those stories in mind and remember the kindness; that will develop profound faith. During the *Migtsema*, the meditation is to think about the qualities of the Vajrayana or Mahayana master, the advantages of having a proper guru-devotional practice and the disadvantages of not having it, and then pray.

<sup>399</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 176-178; Dalai Lama, *Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 121-122.

<sup>400</sup> This is also the place to recite the lineage prayer. See note 56.

<sup>401</sup> Nagarjuna, *Five Stages of the Perfection Stage, Panchakrama*, ch. 1, vs. 69 in: R. Thurman, *Essential Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 251.

Light and liquid comes from the body of Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang, reaches all sentient beings, purifies their negativities in general and in particular the obstacles to the guru-devotional practice, such as not having profound faith, having doubts, or what I call corrupted wisdom.

Questioning too much is an obstacle. If you keep on questioning every damned thing, you will keep on questioning till you die, and then that is it. A lot of people in the US do that. Unfortunately, a lot of good, nice, wonderful and intelligent people continuously question every single thing in their lives. Not questioning at all is an obstacle too. Both show a lack of balance, both block your intelligent faith totally, and in that way your spiritual development is blocked. One has to know where to cut the questioning, when it is time to stop; that is very important in one's practice.

The *Migtsema* was actually composed by Tsongkhapa himself to praise Lama Rendawa. Then Rendawa corrected it, saying, 'It does not fit me, but it fits you, the Chögyen Lozang Drakpa'. So he changed the name in it to Tsongkhapa's and gave it back to him. It is such an important praise, written by such a great person as Tsongkhapa himself, written for his guru, but later it became his own praise. That itself makes a big difference. Above all it is Manjushri. He not only praised this mantra, he committed himself to appear as a master [Tsongkhapa] and even as mantra sound. That not only means the *A ra pa cha na* mantra but also the *Migtsema*.

*The Nine-Line Migtsema*

NGÖ DRUP KÜN JUNG TUP WANG DOR JE CHANG  
MIG ME TSE WEI TER CHEN CHEN RE ZIG  
DRI ME KHYEN PEI WANG PO JAM PEL YANG  
DÜ PUNG MA LÜ JOM DZE SANG WEI DAK  
GANG CHEN KE PEI TSUK GYEN LO ZANG DRAK  
KYAP SUM KÜN DÜ LA MA SANG GYE LA  
GO SUM GÜ PEI GO NE SÖL WA DEB  
RANG ZHEN MIN CHING DRÖL WAR CHIN GYI LOP  
CHOK DANG TÜN MONG NGÖ DRUP TSEL DU SÖL.

*You are Buddha Shakyamuni and Vajradhara, the source of all attainments.  
You are Avalokiteshvara, great treasure of compassion,  
not aimed at true existence,  
Manjushri, master of flawless wisdom,  
As well as Vajrapani, destroyer of hordes of demons without exception.  
O Tsongkhapa, crown jewel of the sages of the Land of the Snows,  
Venerable Guru-Buddha, synthesis of all Three Jewels,  
With my body, speech and mind, respectfully I make requests:  
Please, grant your blessings to ripen and liberate myself and others,  
And bestow the common and supreme attainments.*

*Word by word explanation.* The first word, *ngö drup*, is accomplishments, *kün*, all; *jung*, the source of; *Tubwang*, Buddha; *Dorjechang*, Vajradhara. So: You are Buddha Shakyamuni and Vajradhara, the source of all attainments.

*Mig me*, not apprehending self-existence; *tse we*, compassion; *ter chen*, great treasure; *chenrezig*, Avalokiteshvara. So: You are Avalokiteshvara, great treasure of the compassion that does not apprehend existence falsely.

*Dri me*, no obscurations, faultless; *khyen pei*, wisdom; *wang po*, lord; *jampelyang*, Manjushri. So: Manjushri, master of flawless wisdom.

*Dü pung*, hordes of demons or maras; *ma lü*, leaving none or all; *jom dze*, to destroy; *sangwedak*: Vajrapani. So: as Vajrapani, destroyer of hordes of demons without exception.

*Gang-chen ke-pe tzu-gyen lo zang drak*. Lozang Drakpa is 'Je Tsongkhapa's personal name. The line is translated as 'O Tsongkhapa, crown jewel of the sages of the Land of the Snows.'

*Kyap sum*, Three Jewels; *kun du*, all in one; *lama sanggye*, Guru-Buddha. So: Venerable Guru-Buddha, synthesis of all Three Jewels

*Gö sum*, with my three doorways; *gü pe go ne*, respectfully; *sol wa dep*, I make requests. So: With my body, speech and mind, respectfully I make requests.

*Rang zhen*, myself and others; *min ching*, may be ripened and *dröl war*, freed. *Chin gyi lop*, may I be blessed. So: Please, grant your blessings to ripen and liberate others and myself.

*Chok dang*, supreme and *tun mong*, common, *ngö drub*, attainments, *tsel du sol*, please give me. So: please bestow the common and supreme attainments. The nine-round Migtsema has six enlightened beings named in it.

You focus totally on Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang. While doing so, you remember the benefits of having a perfect guru-devotional practice: you will come closer to Buddhahood; the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas will be happy; it is Bodhisattvas' activity; it stops all delusions; unwanted negative karmic actions will automatically stop; life after life, perfect masters will lead you; you will not fall into the lower realms; you will accumulate as much merit as possible and gain spiritual development effortlessly, without even realizing.

This nine-line Migtsema is the mantra for the Lama Chöpa, But we are all running for time. So now we normally settle for the five-line or even the four-line one.

#### *The Six-Line Migtsema*

MIG ME TSE WEI TER CHEN CHEN RE ZIG  
DRI ME KHYEN PEI WANG PO JAM PEL YANG  
DÜ PUNG MA LÜ JOM DZE SANG WEI DAK  
TEN PAI DAK PO TÖN PA SHAKYA TUB  
GANG CHEN KE PE TZUG GYEN TSONG KHA PA  
LO SANG DRAK PAI ZHAB LA SOL WA DEB

or:

NGÖ-DRUP KÜN-JUNG THUB-WANG DORJE-CHANG  
MIG ME TSE WEI TER CHEN CHEN RE ZIG  
DRI ME KHYEN PEI WANG PO JAM PEL YANG  
DÜ PUNG MA LÜ JOM DZE SANG WEI DAK  
GANG CHEN KE PE TZUG GYEN TSONG KHA PA  
LO SANG DRAK PAI ZHAB LA SOL WA DEB

The first one was the original six-line Migtsema. The line *Ten pai dak po tön pa Shakya tub* means 'The source of Buddhism, Buddha Shakyamuni'. Later it was modified. It was changed to make the first line into *Ngö-drup kün-jung thub-wang dorje-chang* which is the first line of the nine-round Migtsema. In that case there are six deities and six mantras. The four deities are Avalokiteshvara, Vajrapani, Manjushri plus Tsongkhapa. Then you have Buddha Shakyamuni and Buddha Vajradhara. That makes six. The second version is the easiest for us, since we are already familiar with that through the nine-round Migtsema.

#### *The Five-Line Migtsema*

MIG ME TSE WEI TER CHEN CHEN RE ZIG  
DRI ME KHYEN PEI WANG PO JAM PEL YANG  
DÜ PUNG MA LÜ JOM DZE SANG WEI DAK  
GANG CHEN KE PE TZUG GYEN TSONG KHA PA  
LO SANG DRAK PAI ZHAB LA SOL WA DEB

#### *The Four-Line Migtsema*

MIG ME TSE WEI TER CHEN CHEN RE ZIG  
DRI ME KHYEN PEI WANG PO JAM PEL YANG  
GANG CHEN KE PE TZUG GYEN TSONG KHA PA  
LO SANG DRAK PAI ZHAB LA SOL WA DEB



The reason why you can skip the line *dü pung ma lü jom dze sang wei dak* is that the actual qualities of the *sang we dag po*<sup>402</sup> are with Tsongkhapa.

### *Explanation of the Meaning of the Migsema*

*Mig me.* *Mig* is the focal point – “I”. That is the one. At this moment our mind is ‘deluded’, because of lack of understanding of emptiness. Our mind is extremely easy to be stained by attachment, anger or jealousy...all of those. We all have a very fragile mind. You know it very well, If you don’t, just observe your mind a little bit and you’ll see it. You’ll see it when you found your boy-friend touching another man. You’ll immediately notice! That shows how fragile our mind is. We lose the stableness, our minds get completely turned over by one of these negative emotions and we suffer tremendously. Why this is happening? Because our mind is somehow set in the position of protecting “me”, no matter how much you think, “I care for him, I care for her”. That is the tricky drama we show to ourselves in order to cheat ourselves. The end of those things is “me”. That “I”, the focal point of my ego’s interest, is the *mig*. If you trash that, if you penetrate through that... *Me* is the negative of it: “not having” or -less. Your ego’s focal point “I” is not there. In other words, they are telling you: emptiness. Empty of the “I”, which we protect and perceive and think there is.

This is simply telling you: whatever it is your ego is making you protect, if you try to focus on it there’s nothing there! So you’ve been busy for nothing, you’ve been suffering for nothing, torturing yourself for nothing, afraid of nothing. Fear is very much attached with ego. Almost all the fears are coming out of ego. We all are afraid of losing, of being left out, of being lonely, or just being afraid for no [apparent] reason. This is the ego making his or her protection. That’s what it is!

Protection from fear, protection from the negative emotions is the true wisdom. Somehow you make a breakthrough. After that, whatever happens to you does affect you, but in a very limited way and also during a very limited time. When Allen Ginsberg called Trungpa Rinpoche to tell him “My father died I have to go to the funeral,” Trungpa Rinpoche replied, “I’m very sorry, but let your father go and continue with your celebrating of living.” That made Allen write that “Father Death” poem on the way to the funeral: “Teacher Death, your words are true”.<sup>403</sup> Perhaps that one word is the key to overcome all our sufferings – *mig me*.

In other words, *Mig* is the focal point of the mind which thinks that there is something there. So *mig* stands for the thought focusing on the perceived object. *Me* is a negating word. Together it means that the object, *mig pai yul*, which you are perceiving is not there. We have talked about negation before and here that is the mind which is able to refute the object of ego-grasping. I hate to use the word here, but it is the closest to the idea of grasping, holding, hanging on to that idea. That focal point does not exist.

Such a wisdom, which sees that the focal point of that mind does not exist, is in the nature of compassion. *Tong nyi nying che nying po che* – the essence of emptiness is compassion. *Tse we ter chen* means ‘treasure of compassion’. That is how it links up. As a physical identity or representative Avalokiteshvara is the compassion which in essence is emptiness. I don’t want to say he is *in the nature* of emptiness. That would diminish the value of it. You and I and everything is in the nature of emptiness But here the essence of compassion is the wisdom [realizing emptiness]. Avalokiteshvara represents that compassion as a physical deity. Vice versa Manjushri represents the wisdom which is essence is compassion. In short, the essence of wisdom is compassion. The essence of compassion is wisdom. There is no separation. It boils down to one-ness. *Mig me* is emptiness. *Tse wa* is compassion. Avalokiteshvara represents that.

The first line also can go to Manjushri, because of *mig-me*. *Mig* is the focal point of destroying the ego: recognizing the five skandhas as I, what we call *jigta*. When destroying the *jigta*, what we are left with is the interdependent existence, which means emptiness. The essence of emptiness is interdependent existence; the essence of interdependent existence is emptiness. By understanding those first two you will understand Vajrapani’s power is there.

Likewise the second line. Stainless wisdom is Manjushri. The essence of emptiness is interdependent existence and that is love-compassion. So the second verse will also tell you about Manjushri and Avalokiteshvara.

<sup>402</sup> ‘Owner of the secrets’, which refers to Vajrapani.

<sup>403</sup> Allen Ginsberg, *Collected Poems*, p. 654-655.

*Activities Done through the Practice of the Migtsema*

There are a number of visualizations you can do with the mantra.

1. *General Visualization*

From the Supreme Field of Merit in general and in particular from the body of Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang light and liquid comes. It reaches me, washes all my negativities completely away. In particular the negativities against the guru-devotional practice are removed such as disliking, doubting, threatening, and the wish to see the guru dead. As a kid when you get into trouble it can happen that you think, ‘When is this teacher of mine going to die?’ Kids think like that. I had my own personal experience with that. This grows obstacles to the guru-devotional practice. So all of these things like challenging the body of the guru, not listening to the gurus’ advice, getting him or her mad, not believing, not having faith, insulting the guru, *etc*, in short, all the different negativities directed against the lama, all of them have been completely purified.

They leave your body in the form of undesirable colors and insects, like spiders and scorpions. Personally, cockroaches don’t bother me much, nor do mice. But rats do. Visualize whatever you don’t like. Nobody likes the dirty laundry water color, so you visualize that. But don’t mistake that with our coffee!

All of these negativities are washed out of our system completely, out of every hair pore and out of every hole in the body, from ears, mouth, and all the other obvious holes. Our body becomes pure, clean and crystal light nature, transparent. By that our longevity, luck, fortune, spiritual development, knowledge, qualities, *etc*, are all developed.

Especially think that the blessings of the great masters may enter our mindstream through our body, not only me but all other mother sentient beings. May I and all sentient beings remain under the protection of the guru for all our life times.

2. *Special Visualizations*

In the *Ganden Lha Gyema* teaching there are detailed visualizations like inner, outer and secret Manjushri, Avalokiteshvara and Vajrapani, putting them on the different parts of the body, *etc*. I don’t have the time to go into that here.<sup>404</sup> Here I just give you the simple straightforward practice.

2a. *Three Major Activities of the Enlightened Beings*

- Outer example
- Inner quality, as it is
- Secret inseparable

*Outer Example*

[You think]: Avalokiteshvara is the most outstanding example of the compassion of the Buddhas. Likewise, Manjushri is the most outstanding example of wisdom of the Buddhas. Vajrapani is the most outstanding example of the power of the Buddhas.

Looking at these three outstanding examples you say, ‘Hey Tsongkhapa, you are just like them. You are like Avalokiteshvara, you are just like Manjushri, you are just like Vajrapani.’ When reciting the mantra, you think about that and at the same time focus on Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang.

*Inner Quality As it is*

[You think]: What is Avalokiteshvara’s quality? Ultimate compassion. So you say, ‘Oh Tsongkhapa, you have the same quality.’

Manjushri’s quality is the ultimate wisdom. Tsongkhapa, you have the same thing.

Vajrapani’s quality is power. You, Tsongkhapa have the same thing.

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<sup>404</sup> Gehlek Rimpoche, *Ganden Lha Gyema*.

*Secret Inseparable*

On the secret level, which we don't understand, Tsongkhapa not only has the qualities, but he actually *is* Avalokiteshvara and Avalokiteshvara *is* him. The same with Manjushri and Vajrapani. Think about that when you recite the *Migtsema*.

You supplicate Tsongkhapa, 'You, Crown jewel of the sages of the Land of snow, hear my cry, make me like you.'

This is the bottom line shortest thing. You could make it a lot more elaborate. As for the visualization, you actually merge all these deities into one person. They are inseparable. So the first time you compare them, the second time you confirm that, the third time you merge them together. There is no separate person, they are one-ness. So Tsongkhapa is the principal figure in the Lama Chöpa Supreme Field of Merit. He is Lama Lozang. Actually, Tsongkhapa, Manjushri, Yamantaka, these are all the same person.

*2b. Three more Verses*

*Ke pa lung gi yön ten kün den pa*  
*Kye rang ta bur dak kyang jin gyi lob*

Oh learned pandit who has all the information,  
Bless me to become like you.

*Dru pa tok pai yön ten kün den pa*  
*Kye rang ta bur dak kyang jin gyi lob*

You who have developed all the spiritual qualities,  
Bless me to become like you.

*Rig sum ngo wo sang sum dor je ku*  
*Kye rang ta bur dak kyang jin gyi lob*

You are the three different activities of the great three  
Secret performances of the enlightened beings,  
Bless me to become like you.

This takes you a little deeper into the *Migtsema*. You won't have that in the normal *Ganden Lha Gyema*. These are slightly hidden, secret things.<sup>405</sup>

*2c. Memory Development*

Audience: Can you tell us how you can improve your memory through the *Migtsema*?

Rinpoche: You just go: remember, remember, remember. Actually, the memory development comes as part of another, elaborate system of visualizations, the seven wisdoms, which you visualize through the body of Manjushri, his hand implements, his mantra, *etc.* The seven wisdoms include wittiness, quickness, wisdom of composing, of teachings, *etc.* I taught this in detail in the *Ganden Lha Gyema* teachings.

For the specific issue of memory development, I would like to refer to the OM A RA PA TZA NA DHIH mantra, rather than to the *Migtsema*. DHIH is Manjushri's seed syllable.

You can visualize that you are putting Manjushri's sword onto your tongue, upside down. At the tip of that sword syllables DHIH are dripping down continuously as you recite that syllable DHIH one hundred times in one breath.

Finally, you swallow saliva and all the DHIHs dissolve to your heart where you have the mantra mala or just the consciousness itself. When they come down, it is almost like putting oil on the fire. It flares up.

That helps tremendously. I am not sure about the short-term memory, but it definitely works for the long-term memory. This visualization is interchangeable. You will find it as part of the *Ganden Lha Gyema* as well as in the Yamantaka teachings. So you can do it within the Yamantaka sadhana too. In reality, whatever works with the *A ra pa tza na* mantra will also work with the *Migtsema*. That is why it is especially connected with Yamantaka.

<sup>405</sup> For how to use the verses with the mantra, see Gehlek Rinpoche, *Ganden Lha Gyema*.

*More activities through the Migtsema.* There are many more. There is the collection of wisdom by the seven-wisdoms meditation.<sup>406</sup> There are tremendous amounts of activities through the Migtsema. Whatever you need to do can be done. There are activities of healing the earth, the trees, the air, the water. That is the environment. Then there are activities of healing the inhabitants, the human beings, the animals. You can make rain or stop rain. Whether the creation of rain works or not, I don't know. I was told it does work. Stopping rain definitely works. I have a personal experience with that. Many of us know about that. Once we were going on a picnic and we were about to be inundated by rain. I am not going to blow my own horn, but you could really see the difference. It was done through the Migtsema. So it does work. It also works through Cittamani Tara, [and] White Tara. There are also lessons to be learned. If you stop the rain too often, the rainfall and snowfall in that area is going to fall short for a couple of years. Then you feel bad and have to keep your mouth shut and feel small.

These are the results you can see. What you don't see is the purification and the accumulation of merit taking place. The Migtsema is the most important mantra ever to exist, really. The *Yamaraja* mantra is wrathful<sup>407</sup>. Every deity has some wrathful mantra. But this Migtsema is the king of mantras. In Tibet everybody knew how to say it, even the small kids.



There is another story about Pabongka. While he was giving a big teaching, he got an order from the Thirteenth Dalai Lama to make rain immediately. Pabongka told the disciples gathered there that they should say the *Lama Chöpa* and during the visualization of the field of merit he suggested that they put the syllable MAM at the heart-level of Lama Tsongkhapa – the syllable MAM is a character MA with a zero on top, which represents the second M – and in the hole of the zero the letter



HUM.

He said, “During the recitation of the Migtsema light radiates from the letter MAM and the letter HUM in the heart of Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang. This light will become a cloud and the cloud will shower rain wherever there is a need of it, particularly on the city of Lhasa, and particularly on the flower-gardens of the Dalai Lama.” He suggested visualizing in that way, and indeed they got quite a good amount of rain that day. As the rain continued to fall, he used another letter to stop it.

Through the *Migtsema* and the *Lama Chöpa* not only do you have the benefits we just talked about, but you can also give protection, give healings, etc. If you do hand healing, you visualize the light that is generated from the MAM in the heart of Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang passing through your hand, particularly flowing out of your fingertips. There are a lot of things you can do; there are three volumes of activities on the Migtsema.

For Pabongka, just visualizing from the MAM worked. But for ordinary people like us, probably you would visualize the light going from the heart of Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang to the different oceans, lakes, ponds, and springs, to every bit of water where there are nagas. Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang then sits on the head of every naga and by his bliss-void blessing purifies their negativities, problems and fears in general, and in particular their fear of the garuda,<sup>408</sup> and blesses them with great joy. They are grateful, do prostrations to Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang, circumambulate him, and do whatever he wishes, like giving appropriate rain, snow, or whatever. I think it works if you visualize in that way.

Remember,<sup>409</sup> the complete tree, the Yidams, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Dakas, Dakinis, wrathful deities, Dharma-protectors, as well as the mythological figures, the nagas, and the tree itself, its roots, branches, leaves, flowers and fruits, *is* in reality Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang. Different aspects have been actualized and have taken physical form, but it *is* Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang. So, every offering that you make to Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang is made to the complete field of merit, including the lineage masters.

<sup>406</sup> See Gehlek Rimpoche, *Ganden Lha Gyema*.

<sup>407</sup> See Gehlek Rimpoche, *Solitary Yamantaka Teachings on the Generation stage*.

<sup>408</sup> Mythological bird, wisdom-eagle. Arch-enemy of the nagas. Ref. Keith Dowman, *The Flight of the Garuda*, p. 68, Alexandra Lavizzari, *Thangkas, Rollbilder aus dem Himalaya*, p. 215.

<sup>409</sup> See page 114.

A number of people raised the question: if you have many spiritual masters, where do you put them? Right in front of Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang is a group of teachers; the principal of that group is, in this case, the one from whom you received this particular teaching. That very Lama sits at the center as the most important one, and all other spiritual masters surround him. They are looking towards Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang as though they are your advocates, supporting your needs.

Whenever you make offerings and Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang, in accepting the offering, experiences bliss and void, all of them, equally, receive it. Not only that; you yourself, in making the offering, also experience it.

*Migtsema retreat.* That is how you say the Migtsema, at least 108 times is recommended. This commentary says you only say the nine-round one, but I clearly remember that Kyabje Trijang Dorjechang said the four-lined one will do, which makes it easier. And as I told you before, it is not the number, it is the actual ground that you want to build. At the same time, it is very important to do your practice properly and constantly. But if you have too many practices to do, you may not do them at all. That is why it is very important – particularly for those of us who are caught in the ninth non-leisure<sup>410</sup> – to do short, compact practices without too many words to say, yet long enough for us to really get into it. If a practice is too short, you're not getting the kick out of it. I don't think this practice is difficult to do, and if you do the *Lama Chöpa* you don't have to do the *Ganden Lha Gyema*.

If you want to build up however many Migtsema mantras within the context of the Lama Chöpa, you should do at least 108 or 111 nine-round Migtsemas and then continue with the four-line [or five-line] one.

Those who are building the hundred thousand Migtsemas [in the context of the *Ganden Lha Gyema*] can say the five-round version or the four-round version which has one line less. You should also, in conjunction with the Migtsema, do the visualizations of collecting the seven wisdoms.<sup>411</sup> This is also part of the *Ganden Lha Gyema* teachings, in particular the secret ones.

Saying the Migtsema is one of the essence practice of the guru devotion. We recommend strongly to say the Migtsema at least 100,000 times. That is, 10,000 at one place, and then build up to 100,000 at least. We have briefly talked about the meaning of the words of the Migtsema earlier. All the particular Migtsema meditations are available in the *Ganden Lha Gyema* transcript.

Audience: Sometimes I do my Migtsemas in the car while driving.

Rinpoche: How many do you say a day?

Audience: At least one hundred.

Rinpoche: Okay. Then you can't make 108 of the nine-round Migtsema per day; it won't work. Here we are talking about what you do when you are doing a lot of them, like in a retreat. Otherwise, when you do a couple of them, it doesn't matter whether you say the nine-round Migtsema, the six-round Migtsema, the five-round Migtsema or the four-round Migtsema. That is why I try to tell you to relax.

In short, by making these requests through the Migtsema or the lineage prayer<sup>412</sup>, light and liquid come from the body of the Lama, purify all negativities and in particular eliminate the obstacles of the level you are working on.

### Obstacles

If you are working on guru-devotion, the obstacles to be cleared are *not having devotion*, *wrong understanding*, *misunderstanding*, and *doubt*.

If you are at the level of the precious human life, the obstacles are *not appreciating the human life*, not realizing how important and how difficult to find it is.

If you working on impermanence, the obstacle is *the idea of living forever* which we always have very strongly, since no one wants to die.

The obstacles to taking refuge are again corrosive *doubts*. You doubt whether there is a pure state called Buddhahood or such a thing as karma. It actually makes a big difference if you have grown up in a

<sup>410</sup> See page 15.

<sup>411</sup> See Gehlek Rinpoche, *Ganden Lha Gyema; the hundreds of deities of the Land of Joy*.

<sup>412</sup> Lineage prayer of Mahamudra. For the text see Appendix.

culture that naturally believes in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and karma and things like that. (People in those cultures have other problems though, which Westerners may not have.) A society that generally accepts the functioning of karma has a different perspective from one which does not. We here in this room in some little corner of nowhere may accept it, but this society in general has a different perspective. That has a big influence on the individual who does accept these things, particularly in the case of karma and refuge. I have been talking about psychology with some people, and those who accept reincarnation have a completely different perspective in psychology from those who don't.

Tibetans have a joke. When someone goes to the doctor and the doctor does not check thoroughly but gives him some kind of general medicine like aspirin, this is called *she gye dun pa*. It is similar in psychology; if karma and reincarnation are not accepted, all the problems can only be blamed on what happened in childhood.

In a society where the idea of refuge is foreign, in the first, second, or third generation, it makes a hell of a difference. Nevertheless, particularly here in the mid-West, though we may only be in the very first generation, we should consider ourselves fortunate. Better late than never. Really true. When you are in a society which does not believe in anything pure at all, it is very difficult for the individual who accepts, for example, refuge, not to generate doubts and raise questions. Of course, good and intelligent questions are absolutely welcome. But there can be a strange, knee-jerk, kind of rejection. Without any good reason, people often say, "It may be a good thing, but it is better to check it out, don't buy it, be careful." Just this can generate doubts, and if you come across a total non-believer, they will tell you that you are crazy. All this is not helpful.

So there are general society-type of obstacles and there are individual obstacles. When you teach Dharma and come to these topics you can feel a complete difference in the audience. Old Tibet was very devout and even there questions were raised. So for us, doubts are bound to be there.

The way to overcome obstacles of this kind is to have the three-point request and say the *Migtsema* with a lot of strong concentrated visualizations. Also, the lineage prayers, taking refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and purification will help. These practices are more important than here than in a traditional Buddhist society for the reasons I just mentioned. In this regard, recognizing the obstacles is very important. It is very easy to develop a lack of guru-devotion.

*Pride* is another important obstacle to guru-devotional practice. It will not develop so much in people like us who are beginners. But the more information you gather, the more your understanding builds up, the more you see that all the other people's understanding is not as good, the more your pride is going to grow.

It reminds me of a geshe during my time in Tibet, named Para Asung. He was quite good, quite learned by today's standards. If he were around now, he would be one of the top geshe available, no question. But at that time, he was not that great because there were so many other great personalities, particularly Gen Pema Gyeltsen (about whose reincarnation a TV documentary has been made and who is called Kensur Rinpoche now) and Gen Nyima. All of them were from the same place, Para. They were also on a similar level of seniority, or perhaps Pema Gyeltsen and Gen Nyima were a couple of years senior to Para Asung. He had a tremendous pride. He was quite learned, no doubt, but at that time there were so many great scholars, and he was not happy. The other two had a very good reputation and they used to stay close together in the monastery. Para Asung used to challenge them at every opportunity. One day he stated that whenever he saw one of them sitting in the debating courtyard answering questions, "My lion rises up." That means he felt compelled to go debate with them to try to disgrace them. It is a true fact. The more learned you are, the more your pride will come up. Pride will challenge devotion. It will make you think that there is no reason to have devotion. It makes you think, "If I am not better than that, at least I am equal."

So this will be one of the biggest obstacles to guru-devotion, if you have good knowledge. If you lack this, then your obstacles will more likely be doubt and disbelief.

In short, knowing your obstacles helps a lot to overcome them. At least Para Asung acknowledged that "my lion rises". So if your lion rises, watch out. Even the rabbit can make the lion jump into the lake.<sup>413</sup>

By praying and saying *Migtsemas*, your pride and other obstacles are purified and you come under the protection of the Supreme Field of Merit.

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<sup>413</sup> Compare Aesop's fable of the raven and the fox.

### Combining Lama Chöpa with a Sadhana

If you want to do your sadhana within the *Lama Chöpa*, [you do it the following way] :

1. You begin with the *Lama Chöpa* up to blessing the offerings with OM AH HUM. (I hope I am authorized to say it; I seek the permission of the Gurus, Yidams and Dakinis)
2. Here you start your sadhana. You go through the Dharmakaya, *etc.*, complete with the three beings (commitment, wisdom, and absorption beings). For example, you yourself in the form of Yamantaka, at the heart-level Manjushri, at the heart-level of Manjushri the letter HUM, with (if you go according to the long sadhana) the deities on eyes, ears *etc.* You invite and dissolve the wisdom-beings, make offerings and praises.
3. Then, continue with the *Lama Chöpa* up to the guru-mantras.
4. After that, you switch to the sadhana and say the Yidam mantras, like OM A RA PA TZA NA DHI. You don't need to do the dedication of the sadhana, but continue with the *Lama Chöpa* (Note: You can either do the Yidam mantras just after the guru-mantras or at the stage of the Migtsema.<sup>414</sup>)
5. Before the Lama dissolves, at the end of the review of the stages of the path, you switch again to the sadhana, do the Yamantaka dissolving system and rise as Yamantaka with one face, two hands and OM AH HUM.
6. If you want to make a tormo-offering, do it at this point, just before the dissolving.
7. [If you want to put in the Protector Prayers, do it here, just before the dissolving.]
8. Then you go back to the *Lama Chöpa*, dissolve the Lama within you, and conclude the *Lama Chöpa*.

This way you can put only one sadhana in, you can't put two sadhanas in.<sup>415</sup>

### Combining Lama Chöpa with More Sadhanas

[If you want to insert more sadhanas in the daily practice of the *Lama Chöpa*], you can do them after the guru mantras, back to back. In that case you would skip the tormo-offering completely [or do one tormo-offering according to the Yamantaka short sadhana just before dissolving.] If you don't do the tormo offering, you will just lack a little merit. That is about it. In the case of Vajrayogini, you would not have to do the first five yogas with the sadhana. You would start with the 6<sup>th</sup> yoga, the self-generation. That's where you can hit it. That is just common sense. I think it can be done that way. If this is more complicated for you, do them separately. Nothing is compulsory here; I just give you these points in case it is easier for you.<sup>416</sup>

Audience: Is it possible to practice both two four-line sadhanas of Vajrayogini and Yamantaka within the *Lama Chöpa*? How would we do that?

Rinpoche: I am sure you can. Pabongka who made those, has given the instructions that you can do three, four or more, one after another. But I don't think these four line ones substitute for the Heruka body mandala for example. Actually, the four lines ones were not very obviously known. They were hidden somewhere in his miscellaneous explanations. He might have done that for the then regent of Tibet, Reting Rinpoche. He was at that time quite young, in his twenties. Maybe he wasn't saying his sadhanas or may be he asked Pabongka to make versions for him as short as possible. There are a lot of things Pabongka Rinpoche made, many easy things like that, for the sake of Reting Rinpoche. He has sort of hidden them. He has written ten volumes and you find these short practices hidden somewhere. There will be one line here and one line somewhere else. It could be thrown in at the middle of some correspondence. He probably did not want everybody to substitute their longer sadhanas with these ones. But at this time for us they may become appropriate. Normally, when we say that we are very busy, that is not a valid excuse not to do the longer sadhanas. No matter how much we claim how busy we are, we still have every time to do what we want to. But really in case of an emergency or strange circumstances, or when you are really sick or if you realize it is five minutes to twelve and you haven't done your practice yet, maybe then it is permissible to do these short ones.

<sup>414</sup> Though both possibilities are there, commonly it is done after the guru mantra's.

<sup>415</sup> So, this is different from inserting several short sadhanas within the *LamaChöpa*, as shown in our small vajrayana prayer books.

<sup>416</sup> This is usually done with the short sadhanas. See the Vajrayana prayer book, in which is clearly mentioned how to do it.

If you fit the four-line sadhanas into the *Lama Chöpa*, of course you can do the same with the longer sadhanas. The reason is that you have done some of it already as part of the Supreme Field of Merit. For example, it says in the four-line Yamanaka sadhana, ‘*Light comes from the body of the lineage tree and especially Yamantaka.*’ So the earlier parts of the practice, like the seven limbs, lineage prayer, *etc.*, are already done in the *Lama Chöpa*. The same is possible for Heruka, Guhyasamaja, Vajrayogini, Tara, *etc.* That means you insert the four-line [or the other short] sadhanas at the level of the Migsema or just after taking the four initiations.

#### *Four-Line Sadhana of Vajrayogini*

*Light comes from the body of the lineage tree  
And especially Vajrayogini.*  
*I dissolve into bliss-void nature dharmakaya,  
From which I appear as red ball of light bardo Sambhogakaya.*  
*The light transforms into the self-illuminating body of Vajrayogini,  
Which enjoys enlightenment.*  
*(Say mantras, meditate dissolving stage)*  
*By the kindness of the great root and lineage guru,  
By the blessings of the great secret of the secret tantra,  
And by my pure devotion,  
may I see the joyful face of VajraDakini immediately.<sup>417</sup>*

#### *Four-line Sadhana of Yamantaka*

*Light comes from the body of the lineage tree  
And especially Yamantaka.*  
*I dissolve into bliss-void nature dharmakaya,  
From which I appear as a ball of light bardo Sambhogakaya.*  
*The light transforms into the nirmakaya<sup>418</sup> Yamantaka,  
Which enjoys the four branches.*  
*(Say mantras, meditate dissolving stage)*  
*By the pure efforts of this practice,  
May all beings never be separated  
From the peaceful and wrathful aspects of  
The wisdom Buddha.<sup>419</sup>*

Also, if you look at the four-line sadhana of Yamantaka, it says in there *which enjoys the four branches*. The four branches really mean the whole sadhana! Generating yourself into a form a yidam, that is one branch. Then the initiation deities come, do the initiation and the wisdom beings are invited and dissolve to you. That is the second branch. The mantra recitation is the third branch and the dissolving system is the fourth branch. Instead of saying all the words, you just say that all the four branches are completed and you can hit the mantra straight away. Then you skip the tormas offering, go through the dissolving system and just simply dedicate and go. So if you can do that, why couldn’t you do two long sadhanas one after another the same way? That means you can do Vajrayogini the same way.

*Sadhana system.* Sadhanas have a certain system. All the male sadhanas work on the basis of the four branches. If we look into the sadhana, we can see four prior activities linked together and become a sadhana. When they are not linked together, it does not become a complete sadhana. That is why, even in the shortest sadhana you have to generate yourself in the form of a guru yidam, invite the wisdom beings and the initiation deities and all that. There are the purifications and the mantra singing and all of that is

<sup>417</sup> Last verse of the *Praise for the Revelation of the Dakini’s Lovely Face (Taye Gyelwa)* in the Vajrayogini long and medium sadhana.

<sup>418</sup> This is according to what Rinpoche pointed out outside the teachings. The text in use says ‘self-illuminating body of’. Needs a final check with Rinpoche.

<sup>419</sup> Resembles a dedication verse at the end of the short Yamantaka sadhana.



the basic system, worked into the four branches. That is why they are all included in this. In case of mother tantras, they work on the basis of the fourteen suchnesses.

## 2. Making Requests by Remembering the Qualities

These verses are about the qualities of the Lama since a) the root of development of guru-devotional practice is generating intelligent and profound faith, and b) one develops respect by remembering his kindness and qualities. By giving you the qualities of the master, the text also tells you if he is suitable or not, in other words what qualities you should look for when you make your selection.

This has three parts:

1. Qualities of the Hinayana master
2. Qualities of the Mahayana master
3. Qualities of the Vajrayana master

### Quality of the Hinayana Master

*Yön ten jung nay tsül trim gya tso che  
mang thö nor bü tsoh kyi yong su tam  
ngur mik dzin pa thup wang nyi pei je  
nay ten dül wa dzin la söl wa dep*

- st. 37. **Source of excellence, ocean of moral discipline,  
Enriched with the jewels of extensive learning,  
Second Buddha in saffron robes,  
You who keep the monastic vows, from my heart I pray!**

*Yön ten jung nay*, source of all good qualities. All good qualities come from morality, *tsül trim*. Nagarjuna said,

Morality is like the ground or foundation of all good qualities.

*Morality.* There are two sources of qualities: One is from the point of view of the guru and the other is your morality. Out of the three baskets it is the training of morality. A lot of your development from the morality point of view is actually growing out of the vows. You are already doing that when you are restraining yourself from killing, lying, *etc.* These are the ten non-virtues, which are commonly used more or less by all religions. They appeared almost in the same period in the Eastern and the Western traditions. I am sure there was no telephone conference between Buddha and Moses and all of those people but they have come up with the same basic fundamental values. These are: no killing, no lying, no sexual misconduct, not being mean, *etc.* The reason that they almost reached the same conclusion must be the reality that by avoiding negativities we gain positivity. The positivity is basically our morality. And that comes out of cutting negativity.

If there is an opportunity to kill an enemy and you make up your mind that you don't want to kill him, because of compassion or because of your principles, that is morality and it cuts the negativity of killing. Because of that you gain the positivity of not being killed yourself. However, simply sitting there any day and not killing anybody, might not bring you such positivity. Though you are not killing, you are not necessarily building the karma of not killing. But if you have a vow that commits yourself not to kill, then as long as you don't kill you accumulate the positivity of not killing. That is why we recommend to people to take some vows, at least the refuge vows or sometimes the twenty-four hour precepts<sup>420</sup> or the upasaka vows<sup>421</sup>.

I am not asking everybody to become monk or nun. As a matter of fact that comes with great difficulties. In Jewel Heart our specific mission is to work with the lay people rather than with monks and nuns. The monks and nuns have monasteries and nunneries. The moment you become monk or nun, you have cut the connection to any family life, so there would be no reason why you remain stuck in the United States. Why don't you go to Thailand or India or wherever there are monasteries and nunneries?

<sup>420</sup> Eight Mahayana precepts. See Kathleen McDonald, *How to Meditate*, p. 187-195

<sup>421</sup> See note 96 on p. 30.

For that reason in Jewel Heart we don't have monks or nuns, like the FPMT does. That does not mean that we reject monks and nuns, either. We do accept them and hope that they remain monks and nuns all the time. We don't encourage them to give up the robes, at least not me.

From the Theravadin point of view, Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang has perfect morality. His vows are intact, his commitments kept properly. He does not misbehave. That quality is like the ocean, the source of many good things (Tibetans believed the floor of the ocean was covered with jewels). There may be a lot of bad things in the ocean, too, but here we focus on the good things. In Tibet they used to say about the great monasteries that they are like the ocean. There are many good monks but there are also some bad ones there, excellent ones, terrible and miserable ones, joyful ones.

If you really look at it, even our human life comes from morality, not from immorality. No one says immorality is good, but people have big questions about what morality is. True morality is being true to yourself; no question about it. Keeping your vows intact and being true to yourself is perfect morality. If you try to hide your misbehavior, it really becomes immoral and will never work. One way or another, sooner or later, you will get busted, so to be open and true to yourself is really the best.

I remember, a few years ago Allen Ginsberg did a poetry workshop here. He said then, "Whatever comes up in your thoughts, write that down." My thought at that time was that I did not want to get in the position of Jim and Timmy Baker.<sup>422</sup> Allen's answer to that was, "Be open, don't hide anything." That is true. You should not hide anything, but to go to the other extreme would limit your ability to function, so use good sense in self-revelation. I think that has been good for me and for all of us. Morality does not necessarily only concern sexuality or whether you are straight or otherwise, it is actually *being true to yourself*. It is not necessarily what society considers bad, but if you have something that is by nature bad, or that goes against vows or commitments that you have, then admit and purify that. Purify all negativities, whatever they may be.

The one good quality of negativities is that, no matter what they are, they can be purified. When you purify them, it is okay. You don't just ignore them, but take care of them. If there really is such a thing as the Lord of Yama (see there is even doubt in my mind!) who measures our negativities, or if they are measured in some other way, in any case, if you take care of them, it makes all the difference. Just as Buddha said there is a judgment, he also said that if you take care of your negativities, it makes a difference. If this is true, it is true for both sides, purification as well as judgment; if it is not true, it is not true for both sides. So morality is extremely important. The essence is to be true to yourself. It is like me, when several people object to me eating sweets and I still have some anyway, who is the one that is going to suffer? It is me.<sup>423</sup> The same goes for immoral actions. Who gets hurt? The one who does them. When you have perfect morality, a better future life is guaranteed.

*Qualities of the teacher.* Back to the text. Learning enriches this good quality of morality. Since an external signal of perfect morality is celibacy, here you see the Theravadin monk's robes as the sign of perfect morality. That is why we meditate our root guru in Tsongkhapa form. He wears the monk's robe, signifying celibacy, perfect morality, and also learning. So he is the ocean of good qualities enriched by the jewels of learning.

The Theravadin teacher has two qualities, *stable learning* and *strong morality*. These are presented here in the metaphor of an ocean. If you don't have morality, you don't have the ocean. If you don't have the learning, you don't have the jewels. It will be a dead sea! By giving you the image of a living sea, you get the message. Someone who has these two qualities is fit to be a throne holder of the Buddha and can be called 'second Buddha'.

Regarding the word *nay ten*, in Tibet most people would probably tell you it means something like Arhat. In some Lama Chöpa translations it says 'elder'. I don't know what the dictionary says, but it actually has two messages in it. *Nay* means stable, *ten* is also stable. *Nay* refers to someone who kept unbroken vows continuously for more than ten years. *Ten* stands for knowledge. *Dül wa dzin* means vinaya holder, someone who does not break his vows, who has perfect morality.

The qualities of the Lama are having pure morality, kindness, and compassion for weaker people. The fundamental principle of all development within the individual, within the Mahayana master, within the Vajrayana master, within the Dharma master, is perfect morality. The retinue also has to be good and

<sup>422</sup> Two television preachers of morality in the eighties who made a televised confession of their moral misbehavior.

<sup>423</sup> Because of the diabetes.

pure. It disqualifies a Lama if his retinue, the people around him, are not good. If they are bad, it reflects badly on the master. So *pure retinue* is also very important.

What does pure retinue mean? Again, it means being true to yourself. If you are hiding faults and putting on a false face, or if you don't know what you are doing, it is a disqualification for the Lama and then he needs to make changes.

The Lama also has to have a *helpful attitude*. He helps his students through the Dharma, by providing clothes or food for them, or even finding them a place to stay. So helping from every angle is one of the qualities of the teacher.

Another quality is *doing things at the right time*, not necessarily when the student wants it, but when he needs it. These are the qualities of the teacher. Normally they don't appear here, but I thought I would just mention them.

The last line in our translation of this verse says *You who keep the monastic vows*. That is not necessarily the case. The term *Vinaya holder* does not necessarily have to refer to monastic vows. There may be a number of great Vinaya holders who are not in a monastery. For example my own first great teacher was a great Vinaya holder, but he did not live in a monastery. He lived in retreat with very few people around him. When people came round he tried to kick them out as fast as he could. But people started renting places around his room everywhere. So he couldn't kick them out of their own places! We should think of a new term for our translation here. We have to keep in mind that in a root text like this we don't have to explain everything. The attitude in the west seems to be that you have to put a minimum explanation into the translation of a root text. If you do that the result is maximum syllables and minimum message. If you like wordy translations there are very wordy *Lama Chöpa* translations available already.

### Quality of the Mahayana Master

*gang dhang dhen na dhe war shek pei lam*  
*tön pa ö pei yön ten chu den pa*  
*ma lü gyal way chung tsob chö kyī je*  
*thek choh ge wei she la söl wa dep*

- st. 38. **You possess all ten qualities that make you fit  
 To teach the path of the Buddhas.  
 Dharma master, emissary of all the Buddhas,  
 Oh Mahayana Master, from my heart I pray!**

*Gang* means 'what'. It is what makes it great. *Dhe war shek pei lam* actually refers to the Mahayana. *Tön pa ö pei* is one who is fit to be a master. Very often Buddha is referred to as *tön pa* because he is the teacher, the master. *Yön ten chu* are the ten qualities of the Mahayana path. They are what make you qualified to be an authentic teacher of the Buddha's path.

This particular verse extols the qualities of the Mahayana master, your own Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang. It gives you two messages: a) to appreciate them and develop respect<sup>424</sup> and b) when you are looking for a spiritual master, these are the criteria, this is what you look for.

The first line says that one who possesses these ten qualities is fit to guide disciples along the path of the enlightened beings. The Mahayana spiritual master is the one whom I will consider as representing total enlightenment. *Thek choh* is Mahayana. *Ge she* or *ge wei she* really means the one who leads one on the virtuous path. Nowadays it has become a degree, and whoever has this degree is called *geshela*. In reality, the word *geshe* means the one who can lead you on the Dharma path. The Kadampa geshe did not have a *geshe* degree, but they were real geshe as meant here.

*Gyal way dung tsob*. This also appears in the Long Life Prayer that Rilbur Rinpoche has written for me. In both cases it says *dung tsob*. When Jamyang wrote the phonetics, he left the *naro*, the Tibetan vowel sign, out above the o of *tsob*, and it became *tsab*. Rilbur Rinpoche noticed that something was wrong. The meaning changes. *Tsab* simply means 'representative' or 'emissary' or the next in line for the job. But *gyal way tsob* means that you are the nature of all the Buddhas. *Gyal wa* means Buddhas. That is the big difference. Therefore in this translation, the word 'emissary' has to be changed. The lama

<sup>424</sup> Including the wish to develop those qualities oneself.

is not just the emissary of the enlightened beings, but their absorption or their emanation. A little *naro* can make that much difference.

Ultimately you become a Buddha's representative and a dharma leader, so one should be able to lead properly. And also you become the role-model for other persons who practise; they look at you and you become the role-model. In order to make you fit to be the role-model, these are the ten qualities.

*The Ten Qualities of a Mahayana Master*<sup>425</sup>

What are these ten qualities? I emphasize this repeatedly, because especially these days it is very important. People talk a lot about gurus and guru scandals. You have to practice, to work, and at the same time there is criticism. Also, there are those wild, corrupted wisdom-people running around, creating funny situations and creating doubt. Some of them are genuine, but many of them are creating tremendous amounts of unnecessary and unwanted disturbance and doubt for spiritual practitioners, which is a great discomfort and inconvenience for many people.

The words really come from the Buddha and have been practiced and followed by practitioners for two thousand years. So put these cards up, look at them, and see whether these criteria are there or not.

What are the ten qualities? They are listed in a sutra by Maitreya Buddha called the *Ornament of Mahayana Sutras*.<sup>426</sup> This is one of five different volumes of teachings that Asanga received from Maitreya Buddha.<sup>427</sup>

Rely upon a friend who is subdued, calm and quiet,  
Has more virtue, is energetic, learned in scripture,  
And has realized suchness, is endowed with eloquence,  
Has a compassionate nature, and ignores weariness.

1. *Well-behaved – subdued*, that is, out of the 'three baskets'<sup>428</sup> referring to the basket of morality.
2. *Peaceful – calm*, that is referring to the second basket of meditation and concentration.
3. *Very peaceful – quiet*. This one is referring to the basket of wisdom. These first three qualities are specially important. If a master doesn't have those three, he won't be fit to be a Mahayana teacher. You look at your Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang, you see he has all these qualities and you see yourself and think, 'Do I have those qualities? And whatever is lacking you try to develop; you pray to be able to develop them. These are the minimum requirement for dharma-teachers, or dharma-facilitators. Not only for them, but for everyone who is in the dharma, these three higher trainings of the mind are the main thing. Then on top of that:
4. *Knowledge – more virtue*. The spiritual master has to have more knowledge than the disciples, otherwise what are you going to learn from him or her? I believe this one has no discount.
5. *Enthusiasm – energetic*. If the spiritual guide is not diligent enough, he'll be only 'out to lunch' all the time. So, no matter how tired you might be, no matter how sleepy you might be, how sick or how cold, you sit there very energetically, smile and forcefully do whatever is needed. That's what it is.
6. *Rich in sources – learned in scripture*. Being more learned than the disciple is not enough; the person should be rich in scriptural sources. We often refer to that as 'good at quotations', because if you have that knowledge, you can prove the points you make by bringing in references from here and there. Not your thoughts, your ideas and your discoveries; this is a very strong objection here. Very carefully watch your own interpretations, your own thoughts and discoveries, they can sometimes become misleading. That's why the objection is there. That's why you quote someone. Even if you're teaching in English or Dutch, you can quote. There are a lot of books available now and you have obtained the teachings. So, you say "I can remember, he said this and she said that; all this. You can even look in the transcripts and say, "On this page it says this". Quotations are absolutely important for the teachers, to prove you're not making up a story and you're not telling you're own little fantasy.

<sup>425</sup> Literature: Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in Our Hands*, vol. II, p. 27-28; Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*; p. 272-273; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasure of Merit*, p. 179-180.

<sup>426</sup> Skt. *Mahayanasutralamkara*, ch. 17, vs. 10. *The Universal Vehicle Discourse Literature*, p. 224.

<sup>427</sup> For the story of Asanga see: Gehlek Rinpoche, *Lam Rim Teachings*.

<sup>428</sup> Tripitaka, the three baskets of the teachings: vinaya (morality), sutra (concentration), abidharma (wisdom).

7. *Knowing with full knowledge* – [realized suchness]. Not only knowing as knowledge but exactly knowing what you are doing, is important. Also you have to know more than those whom you're teaching. If you don't know more than whom you're teaching, what do you teach? What happens then? This is a problem to many of the teachers in the West; they get completely exhausted, don't know more to say and then sit down and dream something and put it up! So, teach what you know. And preach what you practise. These are the real qualities, you know. Because, if you don't practise anything and tell everybody else: do this and do that, it will not work! It won't help anyone. Traditionally, the good teachers would give teachings on Yamantaka and Vajrayogini on the basis of the sadhana, rather than look into the commentaries. Why? Because you're supposed to be doing it. So: preach what you practise!
8. *The art of presentation – eloquence*. On top you also need a good presentation. If you don't have the art of presentation you'll be boring all the time instead of enjoyable and people will develop an aversion to the teaching. This would naturally happen if people want to learn something but don't enjoy the presentation and have to force themselves to sit there. That is why the art of presentation is needed.
9. *Compassionate nature*. Compassion to all sentient beings and particularly for your own disciples. Equanimity, no doubt, you need, but that alone cannot accomplish everything, so you need compassion, too.
10. *Being able to take hardship – ignores weariness*. That means, if there are annoyances or frustrations, or actual hardships, the teacher must be someone who doesn't get fed up easily.

These are the ten qualities of a Mahayana master. Such a master is called a representative of the buddha. And here you say that Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang has all these qualities. Quoted here in this commentary is Drom Rinpoche, who when asked what kind of Mahayana master is needed, said:

A master, beginning to explain, can really explain all the teachings of the Buddha well. He is able to bring them together and take the essence out, able to present them well and able to give a good understanding to all the disciples. Whatever he teaches is helpful to the people who are practicing when they put efforts in and try to practice. And, of course, it is to the service of the Buddhadharma in general and to the Mahayana Buddhadharma in particular. Such a one, if he or she appears, is fit to be a Mahayana master.

Then I might as well share the following song:

If you have a spiritual master who has worse qualities than you,  
instead of developing you will go down.  
If you have a master equivalent to yourself,  
you are going to remain where you are.  
If you have one better than you,  
you are going to get better.  
Having a wild corrupted wisdom-person  
will scatter your base completely.

The most important qualities, however, are the achievements of the three higher trainings, morality, concentration and wisdom. When you look for the ten qualities, these days you have to give some discounts of say 50% at least, because otherwise there is no way you will find anyone. When you memorize the ten qualities, don't memorize the discounts, but when you really make the selection, you must settle for discounts. However, for the three higher trainings there is no discount. The teacher also has to be more knowledgeable than the student, needs a little enthusiasm, needs to be rich in learning and has to really understand the subject he is talking about. If the person has these qualities, he is fit to act as a substitute for the Buddha. The one substituting for Buddha is the Vajrayana Master and that does not depend just on knowledge alone. You are substituting for Buddha, mind you! This is a little scary, my god! People who share the Buddha's path must try to gain these qualities. People who learn Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism have to look for the qualities of the master. If someone tells you about some strange, whispered teaching, you don't just buy it. A person like me does not even have 1% out of these qualities, but I happen to be here, and I happen to speak the language. You know, we have a saying in Tibet:

A nomad comes to a village household. They have a dog and it starts to bite him. So the nomad starts to climb up a little bit and continues to move up, because the dog keeps biting him. Ultimately the nomad comes up to the top level, because the dog pushed him.

In the true sense of that example, I happen to be talking to you. But you really have to look for these qualities. If you don't, and you just go and listen to anyone, you are going to be misled. And then you are really doomed. I am sorry to say that, but it is important.

*Teachers to be, facilitators, dharma guides.* Actually, these two verses tell you that just being in a teachers training doesn't necessarily mean you are fit to be a teacher. To make yourself a teacher you count ten qualities and see how much you have and how much you don't have. If you have more than 50%, good. If you've less than that... we'll talk about it. That will give you a point of reference, judging yourself. In one way we praise the teachers [in those verses], but on the other hand it judges you. When you become a teacher gradually – and sooner or later you will – some people that are following you, will look at you as a guru, whether you like it or not. And when you are going to become a guru, you will have to watch yourself, “Will I be fit to be a guru? Do I have those qualities?” If you don't and you want to be a guru, build them up. And if you don't want to be a guru, you say, “No I don't want to be a guru”, then you don't have to measure with this at all, that's not concerned. But sooner or later I think everybody here is going to be. When I say ‘guru’ it sounds funny, but you're going to be helpful for the people and you're going to lead the people to the path. A most important point here is, that you should not have some fancy ideas, put them together and teach – that's not right. That's misleading people, because you don't have prove. Whatever you teach or are going to teach, is what the Buddha taught. Why? Then what you teach has already been proved by Buddha and is continuously proved by all these lineages and disciples and they've never mislead anybody; they've lead a lot of people and they've helped a lot of people and led to that level. That is the safe-guard we do. This is one of the main points. Not only as practitioners you have to remember that, but especially as teachers, as facilitators, as dharma guide or whatever you call it. You have to have those because the danger of misleading people tremendously is there. Also, make sure you share only what you know for sure. By simply going through a teachers training or simply following somebody's workshop or simply read books, you cannot bring that and just do it. There is need to be authentic quotations.

And then, one more thing I must say, teachers not only permitted, but even encouraged to say, “I don't know” Don't ever hesitate to say, “I don't know”, if you don't know. Nothing is wrong by that. Nothing! You're sharing what you know. You may be representing the Buddhadharma, but you are not Buddha! So you don't have to know everything, We're not claiming to be enlightened. We're claiming to be sharing whatever we know. A lot of people think, “Even if I don't know, I have to pretend.” No, then you're misleading, cheating yourself and cheating others. If you don't know, say it. That's why we have this sangha structure, with seniors and all of them. You can bring your questions into the group and when they can't be answered, then somebody can e-mail me. If I know, I will say it. If I don't, I'll read a book and will tell you. If I don't I will say, “I don't know”.

So that's about the qualities you need as a teacher.

### Quality of the Vajrayana Master

*Go sum lek dham lo chen zö dhen drang  
yeo dhang gyu may ngah dhang gyü she shing  
dhe nyi chu zung dri dang che khe pei  
dor je dzin pei tso la söl wa dep.*

- st. 39    **Wise and patient, your three doors are well controlled.  
Without pretension or deceit, you understand Mantra and Tantra.  
Skilled in arts and teaching, you have twice ten qualities.  
Oh Lord of Vajra Masters, from my heart I pray!**

*Thirteen qualities of a Vajrayana master*

This is very simple; in this verse, thirteen qualities are mentioned.<sup>429</sup>

1. *Go sum*, that is the three doors, body, mind and speech. The *three doorways are well controlled*, so there is no room for misbehavior. Most translators use here ‘control’ for the Tibetan *dham*. That is a problematic word in English, since everybody seems to have a control issue. Let’s stay away from the control issue and use the word ‘sealed’ or ‘trained’. You could also say that the three doors are well maintained. We are talking here about the awareness of our body, speech and mind. We are aware that we are not verbally abusing people. We are aware that we are not physically hurting people. Sometimes we do hurt people without knowing, even in a physical way. For example, if we usually smile at a person and then one time we don’t, that person will think, ‘What is the matter? Did I do something wrong? He is not smiling at me today.’ However, although that may be hurting certain people, you also can’t have your mouth in a perpetual smile for twenty-four hours every day, unless you wear a mask. But they won’t like that at all either. A objection at the level of Vajrayana is that you may become wild and crazy. That’s why they specifically emphasize it: your three doors are well controlled. The *vinaya*, the rules of the vows, are applicable to Sutrayana as well as Tantrayana. The word *vinaya* in Tibetan is *dül wa*, which means how you train your mind the perfect way, with or without monastic discipline. That is the ultimate *vinaya*. The word *dül wa* translated is taming your mind, which is taming the elephant<sup>430</sup> as well. Actually the three doors are properly sealed or well guarded, so that wrongdoing of body, speech, and mind does not occur. It does not mean that such a person will never do anything wrong, but... I’d rather not comment on that, it is too close to home. I’d rather leave it there.
2. Then, such a teacher must have *profound knowledge*. One has to have deep understanding of one of the big inner signs, the *Prajnaparamita*, equivalent to the *Madhyamika*, which is *Mahamudra*, or *chak chen* in the case of the Kaguypas, *uma* in the case of the Gelugpa lamas, *dzok chen* in the case of the Nyingmapas, The word in the text is ‘wise’. That means the ability to figure out what is right and wrong. If you can’t figure out what is right and wrong you might be something else than wise.
3. He needs to have *patience*. Patience here does not mean that you have patience for every neurosis, but it is patience for Dharma development, for dharmic work. It also means the *special mind*, which is one of the steps of the development of the bodhimind in which you take on the commitment to liberate all beings. That is the real example of patience here. It is not the kind of patience with which you are able to wait until the cows come home. If you make people wait and tell them to be patient, that is not the patience we are talking about here. We are talking about patience for a purpose. Remember, all the six *paramitas* work within the other *paramitas*. There is generosity of generosity, generosity of morality, etc. Here it is patience of patience, wisdom of patience. If you don’t have wisdom you will simply be waiting for nothing, which is totally wasting your time. That is not considered to be patience at all.
4. Then *dhang* – he must be *honest*. *Yo is being without deceit* and means not hiding our own faults. Diplomats and politicians do that; in a very wise way they hide their faults and divert the attention. Be straight forward. Say one thing, whether it is in front of the person or at their back. That does not mean that you have to be blunt either. Some people have that habit. They insist to be straight forward and then say every wrong thing at the wrong time. That may be honest, but it is not necessarily wise. You have to balance that out.
5. *Gyu me* means not blowing your own horn, not putting on a false front, being *without pretension*. *Gyu* is fabricating qualities that you don’t have. In Tibetan it is very easy; you just say *yo gyu* and everybody gets the message.
6. The Vajrayana master also has to *know how to invoke the powers of material and mantra*. Through this one can engage in the activities of pacifying, prosperity, power, and wrath. (Here power means control over.) Material here is not the scientific sort of materialist technology. It is the ancient wise women’s type of knowledge of mixing up certain things, like putting spider webs on your cuts and wounds to stop it getting infected. Rituals are a part of that. It is more like natural healing. *Ngah* is

<sup>429</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 181-182. Dalai Lama, *Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 181, *Fifty Verses of Guru Devotion*, vs. 8, 9; to be found on page 357. Commentary on the *Fifty Verses of Guru Devotion*: Tsongkhapa, *The Fulfillment of All Hopes*.

<sup>430</sup> Ignorance.

mantra. *Gyü is tantra. She ba* means to understand. When you have the words *ngah dhang gyü she shing* you can see that *dhang* just means ‘and’ and *shing* is only a poetic word to complete the stanza.

7. *Great compassion.*
8. *Extensive understanding of the three sets of the doctrine.*
9. Then there is a *double set of ten qualities* [ten outer, ten inner]. Having those twenty qualities, you not only become *dorje dzinpa* or vajra holder, but a principal vajra holder. Vajra means indestructible. It really is indestructible love and compassion. Remembering those qualities, one includes them in the supplication.
10. In addition, the Vajra Master is good at *drawing mandalas* and *giving initiations*. Knowing the mandala itself, how to draw it, present it, and how to lead disciples into the mandala.
11. *The art of teaching of Vajrayana and Mahayana.* It means the Vajrayana master knows tantra, *gyü*, and is qualified to teach it. *Che* means presentation.
12. *Great experience in tantra.* A Vajrayana master has to have a *profound unshakable faith*. If you don’t have that, then if anybody comes and criticizes you’ll probably be changeable. If the Vajra Master has unstable faith in the Vajrayana, then there is no hope for the others left.
13. *A mind controlled by the three higher trainings.*

#### *The Ten Inner Qualities of the Vajrayana Master*

The lists of the two times ten qualities can differ depending on which tantra you are reading but they boil down to the same thing. You just need that for the purpose of information. We won’t be getting the twenty qualities anyway, not at all. As far as I am concerned, I don’t even know how to make a straight torma. A Vajra-master is supposed to know all of that. I don’t even know how to put some little dough together, and if I did, it would take some different shape... and everybody would be giggling. So better not! These twenty qualities are the ones referred to in the 9<sup>th</sup> quality of the above-mentioned thirteen qualities of a vajra master.

1. *Clearing of obstacles:* meditating the protection realms. Knowing how to meditate protection-rims properly and being able to return any obstacles that come.
2. *Knowing how to make protection amulets. Clearing of obstacles:* protecting people by writing mantras and yantras and chakras, etc. It involves drawing the chakras, putting mantras in, folding them and using them for protection.
3. *Knowledge of giving the vase initiation and the secret initiation.*
4. *Knowledge in giving the wisdom initiation and the word initiation.*
5. *Separating people from their protectors in an exorcism, or the ability to perform wrathful actions when necessary.* If you are doing an exorcism and want to destroy an enemy you need to know how to separate them from all their protectors, including local spirits and all of them.<sup>431</sup> If you’re unable to separate him from his protectors, you’ll get more trouble than you’re going to exorcise. I have a very interesting incident here; maybe I should share that with you.

*Story on exorcism.* Chungtsang Rinpoche, a senior lama, who now of course has a reincarnation in India,<sup>432</sup> told it to me. In Nyare Khamtsen there are two big Daggyab lama’s; Daggyab Chentsang, the head of all Daggyab,<sup>433</sup> and Chungtsang Rinpoche. I believe originally there were in Daggyab a *chentsang* and a *chungtsang*<sup>434</sup> Rinpoche, like Drepung had a *chentsang* and a *chungtsang*, and, I think in their seventh incarnation or something, they had a big fight. The case ran for years and finally they split. During the split somehow the Chentsang group won the case and Chungtsang Rinpoche had to walk away from its base with nothing.

So Chungtsang Rinpoche was a very high lama, and for sure a very highly developed person. But his labrang or institute was not that well off; not too poor, but not that well to do either. He was a little bit a wrathful character. He had a voice you couldn’t hear very well, but he was extremely good at the tunes, so he would lead many of the prayers. When I was young, he used to sit on the big throne up there far away from all the monks who had to chant with him, so it was extremely hard to hear what he

<sup>431</sup> Done by ritual.

<sup>432</sup> Daggyab Chungtsang Tulku, Drepung Loseling College.

<sup>433</sup> Now L.S. Daggyab Rinpoche, living in Germany, spiritual leader of Chödzung.

<sup>434</sup> Titles of the two head-leaders of the region Daggyab in East Tibet. *Chen* means big, *chung* means small.



was singing. You could only listen to the ‘tok-ting’ of the cymbals he used and go according to that. If you did not get it right, Rinpoche would not hesitate to throw something at you. But he was a great being.

Kyabje Ling Rinpoche thought Chungtsang Rinpoche was one of the great beings, and invited him to stay with him when he himself became the teacher of the Dalai Lama. They had a special cottage. Chungtsang Rinpoche stayed there and Kyabje Ling looked after everything he needed. Whether Chungtsang Rinpoche would bring in ten or twenty people, they were always taken care of.

Chungtsang Rinpoche told me the following story. In Ling Rinpoche’s lifetime there was a great geshe somewhere and there was a ghost. The ghost was a very wild monk, one of those wild crazy monks who after he died had become a ghost and kept a lot of other ghosts under him. There were actually four of those wild guys who caused a lot of trouble. The monastery requested this geshe to do exorcism and to destroy this ghost. The geshe asked the protector Setrapchen<sup>435</sup> for permission to do that exorcism. Setrapchen said, “Fine, go ahead, up to this level.” In other words, Setrapchen protected the inner circle of this ghost and beyond that, I think, he let it go. The geshe did one exorcism, two exorcisms, three exorcisms, four exorcisms, and every time it was getting better and better. Finally geshela would like to destroy all four of them. He asked Setrapchen who said no. But geshela did not listen, he went ahead and did it. The day he did the exorcism, according to Chungtsang Rinpoche, he set up a picture of four arrows and one bow. On top of each arrow he put one of those wild ghosts and began to shoot: one to the far east, one to the far south, to all the four directions. But, nothing happened. He could not do anything, plus it was very harmful to him, too. He died very soon, within a matter of weeks. That happens if you cannot separate the person from anybody helping them. If you want to do any exorcism, that is what you need to know. This is one of the qualities that are counted.

6. *Knowledge of torma activities.* That is not only torma offerings, but tormas used in exorcisms.
7. *Skill in mantra-recitation:* mental recitation, vajra recitation, commitment recitation, crooked recitation, wrathful recitation, anger recitation, wholeness recitation and so on. Chungtsang Rinpoche did mental recitation a lot. He carried five or six malas all the time and when he said mantras it went ‘pom-pom-pom-pom-pom-pom’ and another mala was said. When I was a kid, one day I was walking next to him, and couldn’t hear a thing, so I put my ear very close to his mouth. “*Om Mani Padme Hum!*” he shouted in my ear. I believe he was doing mental recitation. You will learn about vajra-recitation and all this in the completion stage; then it is necessary. Vajra-recitation is the mantra rising within your body, going up and down, it is one of the techniques to open your chakras. There are two techniques to open your chakras. One is *bum pa chen*, vase-breathing.<sup>436</sup> It is talked about at the completion-stage of Heruka and Vajrayogini,<sup>437</sup> and also elsewhere. It is sort of holding upper and lower airs, that is called vase-like recitation. Then also commitment recitations, wrathful recitations, knowing all seven ways of recitations<sup>438</sup> is covered by this point.
8. *Ability to change practices.* When even after 60 or 70 years of practice – not just after 10 or 20 years – there are no good results one should change something. If you, the practitioner, do everything perfectly, everything in order, without faults and yet you cannot achieve anything, then the Lama should be able to change something. He should know how to do that. There was once a guy who practiced Heruka perfectly all the time and yet it did not work. Finally his teacher said, “Why don’t you change it?” “What should I change?” he asked. The teacher said, “Instead of a Heruka face why don’t you put on a donkey face?” The guy started meditating a perfect Heruka with a donkey face and the moment he did so, it worked. This is how you transform. Since then there has been a complete practice of Heruka with a donkey face. It worked not only for that person, it worked for a number of people, particularly for Sekong Dorjechang.

*Sekong Dorje Chang* was a great master. The last one was Sekong Tsecho Rinpoche, a great teacher. His father was a very well-known master in Tibet, known as Sekong Dorje Chang. He wrote a book called *The eighteen steps regarding Yamantaka*. There are two commentaries of that name. The other one was written by the previous incarnation of Kyabje Ling Rinpoche, the predecessor of my teacher.

<sup>435</sup> A picture of Setrapchen is to be found in R. Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion, The Sacred Art of Tibet*, p. 309.

<sup>436</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear light of Bliss*, p. 54-55. For a first introduction, see Gehlek Rimpoche, *Healing and Selfhealing through Tara*.

<sup>437</sup> Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Guide to Dakini Land*, p. 166.

<sup>438</sup> Not yet known. The commonly known main division into three main ways of recitation: mantra-recitation, mental recitation, vajra-recitation.

Sekong Dorje Chang was a funny guy. He gave a tremendous amount of teachings in the great monasteries, including Ganden, where he was from, while he was a monk. Later, he even gave the teaching on Tsongkhapa's Lamrim *Chenmo* there. At that time he was not a monk any more and people were wondering in what sort of dress he would show up. Everybody was expecting him to come in a very elaborate way. But he showed up together with a donkey, wearing the clothes that the people wear who look after donkeys, white, torn Tibetan lay men's robes. He came into Ganden, leading his donkey along with a stick. On the donkey he kept a complete set of monk's robes which he then wore during the teachings.

When this Sekong Dorje Chang passed away, there was this buddy of his whom he always used to joke with. He did not know that Sekong Dorje Chang had passed away and only arrived back at the time of the funeral. He had the chance to look on during the cremation and saw in there a huge dick of a donkey, standing up in the fire, nothing else. No matter how many times he looked, he could see nothing but this thing. This guy thought it was terrible. He thought he must have committed a tremendous amount of negativities, because everybody else present was seeing Vajrayogini, Heruka, Guhyasamaja, Tsongkhapa and so on, all different visions in the fire of the burning body.

It was just like with Kyabje Gomo Rinpoche, one of my teachers. When his body was cremated, nothing unusual happened until most people had gone home. There was only his core group of sixty, seventy people left. They noticed that the head remained intact and did not burn for a long time. The throat was by that time burnt away to the size of a tiny pen, but was still holding the head up. After hours of burning it was still intact. That core group of people stayed on. These were the people who normally practiced the tsoh together on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. I incidentally carry that lineage. If you people meet on tsoh days and do a little tsoh business, you may actually gain quite a lot. But I am only going to tell you that once. Then it is up to you people. I am not a Japanese Zen master who carries a stick and hits you on the back. You people are also not kids that have to be told by the parents. That's not my job. You can meet together. We do have facilities to meet in Jewel Heart in all the chapters. So those students of Gomo Rinpoche were meeting for the tsoh all the time. They were even called club members. When only they were left, the displays on the head of Gomo Rinpoche started and people would see images of Vajrayogini and others there.

Just like that during Sekong Dorje Chang's cremation the same thing happened, except that this guy could only see that donkey's dick. He thought it was terrible. However, later he was informed that it was actually to do with his practice of Dhombi Heruka. Actually, during their meetings, Sekong Dorje Chang and this guy had only talked about that. His jokes used to be always about that. Now his friend saw this huge donkey's dick in the middle of the fire, with flames around it.

*The mystical Manjushri book – how it came to Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo.* Sekong Dorje Chang also was the holder of this mystical Manjushri wisdom book, before Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo. How did this book come to Pabongka? Somehow Pabongka had the idea of going to attend some Dharma teachings of Sekong Dorjechang, but he did not actually do it. He sort of delayed and delayed, thinking, "Sekong Dorjechang is not a monk," and all that sort of thing. Besides that there was no need, like having to take some teachings from him which he did not have already. For all these reasons together he delayed for a while. The final blow came when Sekong Dorjechang was giving a big teaching for a couple of thousand people and started scolding Pabongka's teacher Dagpo Lama Rinpoche, "A villager sitting in a corner in a remote area, what does he think he knows?" and blah blah blah. That stopped Dechen Nyingpo completely from going to receive any teaching from Sekong Dorjechang.

Then how was this teaching transferred finally? The day Sekong Dorjechang died, Pabongka had a dream. He dreamt that he was going to see Sekong Dorjechang. A number of people had lined up and he had to line up also. He had a small bell and vajra to offer to Sekong Dorjechang. When he reached near him, he was sitting on a huge throne so Pabongka had to look up. Sekong Dorjechang was looking slightly upset, but didn't say a word. He handed the vajra and bell he was holding over to Pabongka, saying, "Made of gold, please take it." He gave it to Pabongka and took the small one he had. That's how the transition was done.

9. *Consecration.*

10. *Rituals of the mandala practice.*

*Ten outer qualities of the Vajra master*

1. *Master of mandala drawing.* That includes sitting in the middle of it and knowing how to meditate. Dri is drawing the mandala.
2. *Master of meditation.* That means knowing how to meditate all varieties of different meditations, including sadhanas of development stage and also completion stage. In the west people think if you know how to sit that is something. But over here how to sit is not even counted as a quality.
3. *Master of hand activities.* Don't think the wrong way! It refers to offering gestures. Actually, if you do a detailed food offering, you generate your hands in the form of different deities. You are also using your hands in the form of a fire-mandala offering of liquid butter. In this manner there are complete activities for almost every deity. That is how the mudra for HA HO HRIH comes in anyway. It is a hand offering.
4. *Body gestures.* That is various sitting postures, with right leg out, left leg in, or both legs together, sitting cross-legged and other different types of positions. In Tibetan it is called *tang tab*.
5. *Knowing the four styles of sitting.* That is vajra posture, lotus posture, Bodhisattva style and Maitreya style, which is sitting on a chair. Remember that poem that Allen Ginsberg had written about mediation. It says in there something like *sit on the ground, and if the ground is not there, sit on a chair*. At first it just seems to be just poetry, but if you look very carefully, he goes through the four styles of sitting. Sitting with the backbone straight and hands on the knees, etc, is the Maitreya's *dug tam*, his style of sitting.
6. *Recitation*
7. *Knowledge of making fire pujas*
8. *Master of offerings*, like tormas, etc.
9. *Master of activities*, such as exorcisms through different means
10. *Master of dissolving.* When you say VAJRA MU you see the invited guests off.

In addition to those qualities, naturally the Vajra Master must have received all the relevant initiations and transmissions, and must have completed the close retreats of these practices.

These are the qualities of the Vajrayana Master. If you have these cards in hand, and know what qualities to look for, then no matter what anyone says, you can make your own judgment. Better to do that than follow somebody who makes a big suggestion and a big thing, then gets disturbed totally and hundreds of people are going to be disturbed by this type of activities, too. That is of no benefit, or maybe it has some benefit to some people, who knows. For the people who have no connection with those masters, there's no problem, it doesn't matter. But for those who have a connection, it becomes a big disturbance in their spiritual life. In order not to have that, in order to get the qualities you look for, you now hold all the cards.

Buddha recommended to give discount on these qualities, because of the time and the conditions. Drawing mandalas and so on are totally discountable. A few of them however are mentioned not to be discountable.<sup>439</sup> So recommended is 50% discount. Accordingly you watch and you make up your own mind, rather than listen to who says what, rather than look at how many articles they write, what the gossip is, or whatever. The point here is protecting ourselves. In my thinking, the way and how that should be done is on this basis of the qualities of the Master.

One who has these qualities is not only a vajra holder, but a principal vajra holder. Remembering those qualities, one includes them in the supplication. You admire Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang, who has these qualities, and you appreciate and acknowledge that. That helps you to develop profound faith.

### 3. Making Requests by Remembering the Kindnesses

That has three parts:

1. Root Master kinder than all the enlightened beings in general.

<sup>439</sup> Not discountable: more knowledge and higher realizations than the disciple has. Ref. Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 180.

2. Root Master kinder than Buddha Shakyamuni.
3. Root Master kind enough to be Supreme Field of Merit.

### **Root Master Kinder Than All Enlightened Beings in General**

*Sang gye drang mey jhön pay ma thül wei  
ma rung dhül kay nyik dhü dro wa la  
dhe shek lam zang ji zhin tön pa yi  
kyap gön thuh je chen la söl wa dep*

- st. 40. **You precisely teach the good path of the Blissful  
To the untamable beings of this degenerate age  
Unreformed by the Buddhas of the past.  
Oh compassionate Refuge Protector, from my heart I pray!**

When you say the root Guru is kinder than all the Buddhas, people will hesitate and think, ‘How can you say the Guru is better than all the Buddhas?’ It does not mean that gurus are better than all the Buddhas. It means that although so many Buddhas have appeared, I happened to be always somewhere else.

#### *Meditation*

Countless Buddhas have appeared, time after time. Even in this eon a thousand Buddhas are supposed to appear. Four of them are already gone. However, I have always missed the opportunity, have never been there when a Buddha appears.

Even in this eon I happened not to be there when Shakyamuni Buddha appeared, gave teachings and obtained mahaparanirvana.

We also live in a wild, degenerate age and our minds are rough and untamed. So from my personal point of view, since I met the Dharma through my root Guru, I am more indebted to him than to all the Buddhas. All the Buddhas have come and gone without my being affected. Now I am in contact, so I have to be grateful to my Guru.

Even if Buddha appeared now, or if I had been around when Buddha gave his actual teaching, what are those teachings? He could do nothing more for us, he could give us nothing more than the methods for accumulating merit and purifying negativities. That’s all there is. Buddha himself made the statement, “Buddhas can not wash away the negativities by pouring water over us.”

(Don’t ask me what happens in the abisheka!)

Buddha himself also said that the sufferings of sentient beings cannot be removed by hand and that spiritual qualities cannot be transferred. The only way is by sharing one’s experience. So, even if Buddha appeared here today, he could not do anything else. Now this same message, this same sharing of experience, is still available through the kindness of the great lineage masters. It still continues. That’s why in my case I am more indebted to the Guru than to all the Buddhas.

Also, all enlightened beings are one in their kindness and compassion. This great protector, the Lama, is the kindest one for me. For me the Lama is more important than all enlightened beings.

### **Root Master Kinder Than Buddha Shakyamuni**

*Thup pay nyi ma dhü kyi nup gyur te  
gön kyap mey pei dro wa mang po la  
gyel way dze pa nye war drup dze pei  
kyap gön thuh je chen la söl wa dhep*

- st. 41. **Now when Shakyamuni’s sun is setting,  
You reenact the deeds of that great Victor  
For countless beings lacking protection and refuge.**

**Oh compassionate Refuge Protector, from my heart I pray!**

.Buddha Shakyamuni came and liberated millions of people. We were unfortunate at that time not to see Buddha's body as Buddha and hear the Buddha's speech as Buddha, and, as time went on, Buddha disappeared. Buddha is compared to the sun which comes up in the east and then disappears to the west. Now this sun has gone and many beings are left without protection. Today, the activities of the Buddha are being continued by the Guru.

What are the most important activities of the Buddha? Tsongkhapa said that the outstanding activity of the Buddha is his speech. His physical activities may have included some manifestations here and there, but they have come and gone. His mind is the all-knowing mind, but it is not accessible to us. So the best that is left for us today is the sharing of his experience. Even after 2500 years the same message is still being transmitted. That's why the speech activity is more important and more valuable than all other Buddha activities. Those are all part of history. The speech activity remains active and alive and is passed on to the many beings without a protector.

Of course I am very grateful to Buddha for setting out that path without which there would be no progress. However, I am more indebted to my Supreme Field of Merit, the root master, than to Buddha Shakyamuni, because the Guru substitutes for him and carries out his activities.

**Root Master Kind Enough to be the Supreme Field of Merit**

*Dhü sum choh chü gyel wa tham chay lay  
gang gi ba pü bu ga chik tsam yang  
dhah chah sö nam zhing du lek ngak pei  
kyap gön thuh je chen la söl wa dhep*

st. 42. **For us, even a single hair pore of your body  
Is praised as a merit field greater than all  
The Buddhas of the three times and ten directions.  
Oh compassionate Refuge Protector, from my heart I pray!**

It is much more merit to make offerings to just one single pore of the Guru's body than to make offerings to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of past, present and future in all the ten directions. That is not saying that the guru's hair pores are greater than all the Buddhas of the three times and ten directions. However, it is me and my connection, my concern. That is why for me, for the purpose of purification and accumulation of merit, this is more beneficial and more important.

Earlier we mentioned *ba pü*, the body hair<sup>440</sup>. Here, the actual hair pores, *ba pü bu ga*, refer to the retinue, the disciples, the students, family-members and all those who are connected with the Guru, including pets and dolls, cats, squirrels, fleas, all of them.

How is this possible? This is a big question. I know Westerners don't like to hear it, but Tibetan Buddhism considers the parents to be very kind and great, so that, if you kill a parent, it is not only the karma of killing, but also one of the five limitless non-virtues. Killing both parents is almost equal to killing a Buddha or an Arhat. The flip side of that is that when you are very generous to your parents, it accumulates more merit than being generous to any other person. This is accepted in Tibetan society without argument. The simple reason is that your parents have given you life; they have been instrumental in making your life possible. You may think you have deserved the right to be a human being, but they have nevertheless been instrumental in providing the conditions for you to obtain this life. No one can deny that. Therefore killing father or mother is one of the five limitless negativities with the flip side that the parents are a very good field for accumulating merit. That is the example.

In terms of qualities, our Guru has no better qualities than all the Buddhas and Buddha Shakyamuni in particular, but in terms of your own indebtedness, your own spiritual Root Master, your Supreme Field of Merit, is particularly recommended as object on whom you can purify and as object to accumulate merits, especially made and designed for you. That is what the traditional teachings tell you. He is accessible, available, within reach. Buddha himself has said,

<sup>440</sup> See page 110.

At the time of the degenerate age I will make myself available for you in a suitable form.<sup>441</sup>

So Buddha has made that commitment to us. If our spiritual master is not that suitable form, then where else are you going to search? The Lamrim relates that one of the earlier teachers, Geshe Tolungpa, preferred to give donations to his Lamas, who lived in the low area. So people asked, “What about the monasteries?” His reply was, “I get more benefit by feeding my Lama’s dog, than by giving teachings to all the sanghas, or feeding the monks and making offerings to them.” He used to give everything to his master, who happened to be from the low area, including feeding his dog.<sup>442</sup> That relates to this particular verse. So,

This Supreme Field of Merit is especially designed for me and therefore I am more indebted to my Master than to Buddha Shakyamuni. My Root Master is designed to be the base on which I can purify and create merit. That is the function of the field of merit. If you have a corn field what else is its function but to grow corn?

#### 4. Outer, Inner, Secret and Suchness Supplications

##### Outer Supplication

*Dhe shek ku sum gyen gyi khor lo ni  
thap khay gyü trül dra wei jo gek lay  
tha mel tsül gyi dro wa dren dze pei  
kyap gön thuh je chen la söl wa dhep*

st. 43. **From the web of your miracle powers and skillful means  
The ornament wheels of your [blissful] bodies  
Appear in ordinary form to guide all beings.  
Oh compassionate Refuge Protector, from my heart I pray!**

*Dhe shek* – well traveled, well gone. He has traveled smoothly, peacefully. When we call Buddha ‘Lord’ or ‘Victor’ it is because he has gained victory over the four maras or evils. It is the same terminology we had a little earlier when we talked about the *dhe war shek pei lam*.<sup>443</sup> For short it becomes *Dhe shek*. He is free of the four evils. I mentioned what the four evils are when we talked about the three types of nectar that Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorje Chang has in his begging bowl.<sup>444</sup> *Ku sum* means the three kayas, the form-, mind- and nature kayas. Don’t always think that the three kayas have to refer to the Dharma-kaya, Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya. The next key word is *gyen* – ornament. *Kor lo* does not have any special significance here in this context, except in the sense that just as the rim of the wheel keeps the spokes together, the form-kaya keeps the other two kayas together. So the expression is just a poetic device to keep the sentence flowing in Tibetan.

Audience: Can you understand our frustration when half the words in these verses don’t mean what is literally denoted language even in Tibetan?

Rinpoche: That has been transmitted like that for centuries and that is the way how you get into it. 99.9 per cent of Buddhist teachings are in that format. Professor Gomez from the Michigan University therefore praised Professor Thurman once for making the Vimalakirti sutra at the least half way readable. He meant it! That is how literature works. So in poetic terms the word ‘wheel’ in this case does have meaning: the combination of these three kayas moving or traveling smoothly – like a wheel. The spokes of the three kayas are maintained in that wheel. This wheel of the three kayas has traveled and overcome the four evils. That great wheel has the methods to show whatever needs to be shown to whoever needs it. It can perform whatever is useful for the individual to suit their minds, yet appearing as an ordinary, everyday human being. The guru has come and functions just like the guy next door. But through that he has

<sup>441</sup> Mentioned in almost all tantras, especially in the *Hevajra Tantra*. Gehlek Rinpoche, *Lam Rim Teachings*, p. 135

<sup>442</sup> Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in Our Hands*, vol. II, p. 8.

<sup>443</sup> P. 214.

<sup>444</sup> See page 101. Also see Gehlek Rinpoche, *Shantideva’s Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life*, Chapter 2, commentary to verse 8-9.

been helping and guiding the people in need tremendously. That is what *appear in ordinary form to guide all beings* is getting at.

Audience: So is the translation of *dhe shek* as ‘gone to bliss’ wrong?<sup>445</sup>

Rinpoche: Yes, that is wrong. It does not mean ‘entered into joy’, but comes from *dhe war shek par* – well traveled, without obstacles. Buddha often gets that name, amongst others like *jig den shen par* - The one who knows the world, or *kyi bu du wa* – The one who knows how to conquer, or *kalu gyur wa, lana me pa* - The one without equivalent. *Lha dang mi gyi tön pa* – Teacher of Gods and humans. *Chom den de*, Shakyamuni. These are all epithets. So you have to cut the *blissful* out of *ornament wheels of your three blissful bodies*. Just say ‘bodies’. The Dharmakaya is a body of bliss and the rupakaya may have bliss, but you can’t call it ‘bliss body’, and then you have the nature kaya.

*From the web of your miracle powers and skillful means* – perhaps the first two lines should be reversed to make the verse read:

***The ornament wheels of your bodies appear  
From the web of your miracle powers and skillful means  
in ordinary form to guide all beings.  
Oh compassionate Refuge Protector, from my heart I pray!***

That would work better. This verse talks about pure vision. Everything appears as impure for us with our delusions. To the ones called yogis and yoginis, who have very good meditative abilities, all appears as pure vision. To those who have completely overpowered the dualistic mind, everything *is* pure vision. They perceive Buddha’s pure body, speech, and mind, pure efforts and activities.

Buddha’s activities are divided into benefiting self and benefiting others. Buddha has fulfilled his own purposes, because there is nowhere else for him to go. He has gone beyond. He also is able to fulfill the purposes of others. The activities of Buddha are called wheels because they function continuously without ever stopping.

We perceive what is suitable for us. Buddha manifests in that way. Since we are deluded, we have impure vision, and accordingly, our Gurus appear to us in ordinary form. Regarding the perfect outer appearance, Gungtang Jampelyang has said,

As for the ordinary outer appearance, perfect morality is the groundwork. Internally it is the two stages of the Vajrayana that have to be developed. Thus the paths of sutra and tantra are not contradictory, but help and complement each other.

That is the outer appearance of the Supreme Field of Merit. This verse is *Nirmanakaya*-oriented.

The ultimate body of enlightenment, with all of the mandala within the body, cannot even be seen by the Bodhisattvas at a high level, or even the Arhats of either the *Shravaka* or *Pratyekabuddha yana*. However, through your great, enlightened activities, by manifesting as an ordinary person, your outer, inner, and secret activities can be directly observed even by ordinary human beings like me.

Not only can we see you physically, but your body can be generated in the form of Yidams, deities, Dakinis and Dakas, so that we can perceive, you, great Master, as in reality Lama, Buddha, Dharma, Sangha and Protectors. I bow to you.

In this way, by realizing that you are in a more advantageous position than even high-level Bodhisattvas or Arhats, you remember the Lama’s kindness.

### Inner supplication

*Kyö kyi phung kham kye che yan lag nam  
de shek rih nga yap yum sem pa dhang  
tro wö wang pö rang zhin choh sum gyi  
dhag nyi la ma choh la söl wa dhep.*

<sup>445</sup> Referring to verse 10; see page 107.

- st. 44. **Your aggregates, elements, senses, and limbs  
Are the Fathers and Mothers of the five Buddha Families,  
Bodhisattvas and wrathful deities. Oh Supreme Lama,  
You who are the three Jewels, from my heart I pray!**

*Kyö* is yours. *Phung* stands for *phung po*, that means skandhas. *Kham* means elements. *Kye che* means eyes, ears, nose, and so on, *yan lag* means limbs. *De shek rih nga* refers the five castes of the Buddha. Remember, we have all these five Buddhas covering various parts in the body of the lama. *Yab yum* – the male and female; the buddhas are the skandhas, the consorts are the elements. *Sem pa* and *sem ma* are the Bodhisattvas. The commentary literally refers to both, *sem pa* and *sem ma*. *Tro wö* are the ten wrathful deities. All of these have been quite clearly mentioned at the generation of the Supreme Field of Merit. *Choh sum gyi dhag nyi* – it is in the nature of those five Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, etc. Literally it means ‘collection of Three Jewels’. Three Jewels really refers to all the deities above.

These are the inner qualities of the Supreme Field of Merit. We have generated the Supreme Field of Merit earlier: the place, principal, deities put on the body of the principal and retinue. Actually the ‘body mandala’<sup>446</sup> is the inner supplication. The five aggregates have become the five Buddhas, the four elements have become the four consorts, the six senses as well as the veins and joints are the eight Bodhisattvas<sup>447</sup>, the limbs are the ten wrathful protection deities and the light rays are the protectors. The components of the bodies of the Supreme Field of Merit are these deities. Therefore, the Guru is the accumulation or collection of all enlightened beings. That is his inner quality. Instead of looking at the intestines, pancreas, liver, heart and kidneys, you look at the components as the five Dhyani Buddhas and the four consorts, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, wrathful deities and protectors. So naturally that is the collection of the objects of refuge. You think,

We put all these deities in the body of the guru in order to lose and release the hold onto the identity. The message behind it is that my guru is the collection of all those enlightened beings. Because of this, because of how the body is structured, it is actually the primordial Buddha. *You yourself are the ultimate enlightened mind. I bow to you.*’

This verse is *sambhogakaya* oriented.

### Secret Supplication

*Kun kyen ye she röl pa lay jung way  
kyil khor khor lo je wei dah nyi de  
rik gyay khyap dhah dor je dzin pei tso  
zung jug dang pö gön la söl wa dhep.*

- st. 45. **You are the essence of ten million mandala wheels  
That arise from the play of omniscient pristine awareness.  
All-pervading Lord of a hundred Buddha families,  
Foremost Vajra-holder, Protector of the Primordial Union,  
from my heart I pray!**

*Kun kyen* means all-knowing, that means everything, relative and absolute existence, without getting mixed up about it, knowing everything detailedly and with discrimination. *Ye she* is the wisdom which is inseparable from the bliss-void nature. *Röl pa lay jung way* – such a union of method and wisdom. *Röl* means really union. That comes from the mandala: *kyil khor khor lo*. Then it says in our translation *essence of the ten million mandala wheels*. I question the use of the word ‘essence’ here. Essence means the concentrated pure part. The Tibetan word here is *dah nyi*. In this case it is one who creates, manifests.

Audience: What about quintessence? That is the thing you are searching for in alchemy, the deepest thing of all. Rinpoche: You could say that for *nyi*, but *dah* for *dah po* gives you the connotation of ownership. It goes together with the term *khyap dhah*, which means ‘all-pervasive Lord’. *Khyap* means ‘pervasive’ and *dhah* again refers to ownership. These terms are coming from the same point. What it is real-

<sup>446</sup> See page 106.

<sup>447</sup> See note 234.



ly saying is that you are the creator of your own mandala. The author is saying about the guru, ‘You are the creator of all those millions of mandalas.’

What does that tell us? Creator is not a strange word for us. We look to God as the creator of the existence anyway. In a way it is true that each and everyone of us has created his or her own mandala. (This may be the ultimate theoretical point of Atheists. I’m sorry, sometimes I think that way.) How do we exist? How do I exist? I do exist because I’m here! I’m here because of my karma. And I’m here with my mandala, with my universe. I may share your universe, but I have do my own universe. So does end each and everyone of us. And our own universe we plug in together and we function collectively. When I die I withdraw my universe, so you people don’t see my universe no more, so the sharing of my universe has stopped. From that point of view you have created your own universe, your own existence. This may go very strongly against some others, I don’t know, but those are my thoughts. It is not a Buddhist teaching, it is my thoughts. I have to make that clear to you. This is how each and every human being exists, because you come in as a human being, you plug in into the human society and you function. We have groups, meetings, parties and schools and families and all this and we plug in our universes together and we function. Who created it? Me; it is my universe. That is also the point, where I make myself responsible. Every human being, every being is responsible for him or herself. That is the principle. Because it is our universe, it is our responsibility, our own karma, created by ourselves. That’s a true fact. We don’t have to worry about who made the thorns sharp and who made the peas round, but we do have to worry about why I am the way I am. That’s because of our own responsibility, our own creation.

A mandala is a manifestation of a mandala principal deity, an enlightened buddha or whatever. So it becomes *dang pō gön po*, which means primordial creator. And when we become that principal deity, then we, each of us, will create that mandala and we will lead people into that mandala by giving the information available and all this. It will be your own creation.

This praise is extremely deep. In one way You are praising the Vajramaster, but on the other hand reflecting yourself, your true existence. I just wanted to raise this and talk to you about it.

This verse talks about the wisdom truth body, *ye she cho ku*, the *Dharmakaya*. When you obtain enlightenment, you first obtain the *Dharmakaya*, then *Sambhogakaya* and *Nirmanakaya*, first the mental and then the physical manifestation. From the *Dharmakaya*, enlightened beings manifest in the various different mandalas. *Röl* here stands for *nam röl* which is manifestation. The wisdom *Dharmakaya* manifests as the countless different mandalas.

*Buddha casts.* Buddha Vajradhara is always referred to as the Pervasive Lord of the hundred Buddha families, almost as if he is their creator. In Guhyasamaja there are thirty-two deities.<sup>448</sup> If you drop the ten wrathful deities plus the two Bodhisattvas Kuntu Zangpo and Jampa, you are left with twenty. Each one of those can be multiplied by five, the southern, northern, eastern, western and central Buddhas and then you have the *hundred Buddha families*. That’s how you get the divisions into hundred castes, five castes, three castes and one caste. The ten wrathful deities are not counted as fully enlightened beings, so you don’t include them in the Buddha castes. The Bodhisattvas are labeled here as Bodhisattvas, so you take them out as well.

The *five Buddha families* are of course the five dhyanī Buddhas, with Akshobya in the center, Amoghasiddhi in the north, Ratnasambhava in the south, Amitabha in the west, and Vairochana in the east. They are actually the five purified skandhas, like form, feelings, *etc.* Each of these five Buddhas has a particular wisdom, which actually are the five defiled emotions purified.

The *three Buddha castes* are the body, speech and mind in the form of Vairochana, Amitabha and Akshobya respectively.

The *one Buddha caste* is those three condensed into one. Here, that is Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang. In other words Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang is the essence of all the hundred Buddha castes; they are all created from him, they originate from him. Since he has manifested them, he is pervasive in them, he has his own touch, his own influence in his emanations.

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<sup>448</sup> See page 362.

In this manner the Guru is the vajra holder. This is divided into the absolute and relative vajra holder. The absolute vajra is inseparable bliss-void. To symbolize that, the outer manifestation holds the vajra in hand; that is the relative vajra. So the Guru is the most important vajra holder, *dor je dzin pei tso*.

*Dang pö gön po* needs to be explained. *Dang pö* means first. The place where you first attain enlightenment is *Ogmin* or Akanishta pure land. According to the *Abidharmakosha*, Buddhas don't obtain enlightenment in the desire realm or formless god realms, but in the form god realms. There are seventeen of these and the highest one is Akanishta. So that is the first place where the union of body and mind occurs. That is actually why, in the Guhyasamaja system, the Sambhogakaya is also referred to as *dang pö gön po*. Literally that means the 'first protector'. In our translation it is called '*protector of the primordial union*', referring to the first mind of the enlightened level.

*Akanishta*. Tsongkhapa makes it clear that our first or original ordinary mind is not an enlightened mind. That is not to say that when you encounter your true mind you are not encountering a pure level, but the primordial state of our own *ordinary mind* is definitely not enlightened. That is why Tsongkhapa points out that, in our case, Buddha nature is only at the seed level, it does not function as such. So, with that in mind, you become the primordial or first Buddha at the level of attaining the Akanishta form realm, in English the Peak Form Realm.

You may ask if that is so, how is it possible to attain enlightenment in this life or in the bardo? Do you have to go to Akanishta in any case? The answer is that we as human beings are capable of attaining enlightenment in this life. However, we will go for a very short period to Akanishta. There is nothing wrong with that, since you don't have to die to go there, once you have reached that level of attainment. In this way there is no contradiction with Vasubandhu's statement in the *Abidharmakosha* that one has to go to Akanishta to attain enlightenment. In Vajrayana, it is said that you can attain the union of clear light and illusion body at any place. In any case this is not a serious problem, because when you get to that level, the problem will be automatically solved.

You remember, the clear light is divided into exemplary and ultimate clear light and the illusion body into impure and pure. The primordial Buddha state is the union of ultimate clear light and the pure illusion body. That is the experience of the individual. That is very important.

*Primordial mind*. At our level, where we are coming from, the home, really is the primordial mind.<sup>449</sup> And the process is one of going back. That is why during the time of the death you really touch back to the primordial mind at once. Also in our three-kaya practice you have the process of meditating or pretending to see all eight stages of death and finally thinking, "Hey, I'm here." How do we reach to this primordial-mind level? One way is: by nature at the time of death. The other one is: man-made – opening up the central channel and going through the process. By entering the energies and consciousness into the central channel and having them remain in there you will automatically have those death signs come in. What we are doing in our sadhanas is training ourselves to be able to reach to that level, so sort of by efforts rather than the natural way. With awareness you can direct. We try to open the central channel and have that experience while alive, in order to have the total process done within the lifetime not depending on the death. I believe that's the ultimate goal.

If you don't have the bliss, the true bliss, you can't stay at the primordial mind. You see it and bounce back. (I got understanding out of this movie *Never Ending Story*. There is a crazy scientist running up and down and the boy is not prepared. When he sees his own reflection he bounces back. Then somewhere he closes his eyes and jumps in and is going through.). So the opportunity of using that [state] doesn't rise. You can't use, it unless you are totally used to it.

Bouncing back a million times, that's why in Sutrayana you take hundreds of eons. (Though emptiness and primordial mind are not the same, the same goes for emptiness). In Vajrayana you don't take that long a time because the mind is put in the joy-nature and then you can stay there. It's almost like taking drugs. When the mind is influenced by drugs, you can be there at least for a while, until the effect of the drugs go away. And when drugs are not there, you won't even get there. This is a very gross example, not great, but at least an example that communicates to us, because we are used to it. (We are in Holland, where you can go to the coffee shop.)

<sup>449</sup> in the previous paragraph called 'primordial state of our ordinary mind'.

Every time you die, you reach to that level, but you don't recognize the emptiness. That's why you bounce back. Bouncing back means not reaching level of liberation but taking rebirth into samsara. That's how we're pushed back. We're pushed back, because it is hit and bounce, like a ball. That's what happens.

This verse refers to the one who creates the mandala, the one who creates the manifestation of all enlightened beings, referred to as the primordial Buddha. Even in the long mandala offering that you say before and after initiations, you find 'inseparable from the primordial Buddha'. This verse is *Dharmakaya* oriented.

### Suchness Supplication

*Drip me lhen kye ga way röl pa dhang  
yeer me ten yoh kün khyap kün gyi dhag  
thoh ma tha dral kün zang dhon dam gyi  
jang chup sem ngö khyö la söl wa dhep.*

- st. 46. **Pervasive nature of all things stable and moving,  
Inseparable from the play of faultless, spontaneous joy,  
Thoroughly good, from the beginning free from extremes,  
Oh actual, ultimate Bodhimind, from my heart I pray!**

*Drip me* means free of obstacles. The particular obstacle referred to here is the dualistic hallucination. So the guru is free from dualistic hallucination. The mind perceiving in this way is also in union with joy – *ga way röl pa*. This is inseparable from Buddha's pure nature – *yeer me*, and that includes *ten yoh* which means both, environment and inhabitants. Our translation uses 'stable and moving'. So this pure nature of environment and inhabitants is coming out of your mind and is free of obstacles and in union with the joy-nature. *Kün gyi dhag* means pervasive owner or creator of all. *Thoh ma* is from the beginning and *kün zang* means 'always good'. *Dhon dam* means absolute reality. *Jang chup sem ngö* – that is actual bodhimind. Our translation of this verse is actually very good. It is very hard to do and it includes so much, every syllable adds up. All these previous [supplication] verses, is how you build up completely the emotional connection with your spiritual master.

There are two obstacles to enlightenment, delusions and imprints of delusions. The delusions are cleared at the level of an Arhat, the gross delusions even on the level of the third path, the path of seeing. But the imprints of the delusions, *she drip*, are still there until just before enlightenment. At Buddhahood you have a mind free from both obstacles and their imprints.

That mind has the simultaneously born bliss. That means that this mind is in union with bliss, with simultaneously born joy. The moment you focus on voidness, joy or bliss arises automatically. The moment you generate bliss, you focus on emptiness. They are combined and that's why it is called simultaneously grown. The freedom from obstructions and their imprints is the result of concentrating on emptiness and that brings joy. That joy is the simultaneous joy, whether you call that 'unblocked orgasmic joy' like Thurman does or whatever else. That void mind free of obstacles enjoys bliss. That is where the term *röl* comes in as the enjoyment, and probably that is what Thurman translates as 'orgasmic'.

*Primordial mind*. Actually, all existence is by nature wisdom itself. It is in the nature of emptiness. Remember the praise to Manjushri in the Yamantaka Thirteen Deity sadhana where it says that Manjushri is the nature of all existence. This is because Manjushri is wisdom, which is emptiness, which is the nature of all phenomena. So all phenomena are empty in nature, the nature of wisdom, and you are playing with them. Who is playing with them? The primordial mind which acknowledges the emptiness and is in the state of joy. You can almost say that all phenomena are manifestations of the primordial mind, and therefore it is almost like the creator of everything.

It is all pervading. Everything comes out of emptiness. If there were no emptiness, there would be nowhere from which anything could come. Everything would be filled up in the first place, but since there is emptiness, there is room for movement, and everything functions. So all existence grows out of emptiness. That way it is the play of mind, the manifestation of mind which is

in the nature of joy. In this sense, the primordial mind of the Supreme Field of Merit is almost like the creator of all existence.

This has no beginning and no end. It is in the nature of emptiness. The primordial Buddha mind might have a beginning, but the primordial existence does not. Neither does it have an end. It is always good (Remember, *kün zang* is not translated here as Samantabhadra<sup>450</sup>). In other words, Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang has the same nature as the first Buddha that ever existed and as all Buddhas that will ever exist: primordial, indestructible and inseparable from the bliss-void nature.

Suchness refers to the nature of reality. If we could skip this word and talk directly about the nature of reality, it would be much easier. The wisdom of emptiness is in the mind of the Supreme Field of Merit. This is the primordial mind, from which all manifests, which is playing with whatever exists. So 'always good' refers to being good in the beginning, middle and end, which again refers to the nature of reality, emptiness. That is absolute bodhimind.

That is the explanation of this little verse. I did not do a very good job, but it is better than nothing. At least you get some understanding or grasp of it.

To make it short and easy: What is the absolute true quality of the Supreme Field of Merit? It is nothing but wisdom that also has the joy.

The wisdom of the Theravada and Mahayana sutra level is the same wisdom as Vajrayana wisdom. It is the same emptiness. But the reason why Vajrayana is so important and powerful is that this wisdom is not a dry wisdom but a juicy wisdom. What makes it juicy is the joy, the bliss. Bliss gives you a sharp edge and makes you focus more.

It is simple. If you have sex, you are not focusing on anything else, unless you want to create trouble! You are very well focused. Sexuality is the example. The depth, the intensity, the sharp edge, the power, that is bliss. That makes the difference. That is why the bliss-void combination, the *dhe tong yeer mey*, not only the combination but the inseparability, has an edge over the sutra methods of Mahayana and Theravada. The power of Vajrayana comes from that joy, that bliss. That gives you intensity, and that intensity of concentration power makes the difference. So the special quality of the Vajrayana is the bliss-void combination.

Going back again to the verse. *Drip me* is to clear all the obstacles, *i.e.*, delusions and imprints of delusions; *then kye ga wei* refers to the simultaneously born great bliss. The ultimate, *dhon dam*, combined with the bodhicitta, gives you the absolute bodhimind. The absolute nature of reality is nothing but the combination of bliss and void. If that is combined with compassion, it becomes the ultimate bodhimind. The senior lamas always tell you:

*Tong nyi nying gye nying po che*

Wisdom is the essence of compassion and compassion is the essence of wisdom.

That is the absolute bodhimind. This is the absolute reality of the Supreme Field of Merit. The physical appearance in this case is that of Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang. That absolute bodhimind, the bliss-void combination, is the absolute Lama.

*Perception of the Lama.* How do we perceive the Lama? (a) First we perceive an individual human being as lama. (b) Then we perceive a vision, a more subtle level, more than an ordinary person. For example, Tsongkhapa appeared to Kedrub in five different visions, which you can see depicted in some thangkas. He did that in order to show the second category of perceiving the lama, in the visionary manner. Visions can be very dangerous, but you still have to have them. There are two types of vision: when all the three chakras are pure, you get pure visions, when you have delusions, you get deluded visions. So to have visions of the Lama is the second kind of perception, subtler than the Lama as a person. (c) Then finally the very subtle, the ultimate, the thing we have been talking about, is the bliss-void Lama. It is what you get as 'this is it', the ultimate Lama, that's what you hold on to. That's why I said instead of 'suchness' we could say 'ultimate'. That is the reason.

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<sup>450</sup> See page 86.

Now remembering the qualities of the suchness makes much more sense. It means reality. This is both difficult and important, because ultimately you will have union with the mind of the Lama which is the ultimate Lama, the bliss-void Lama.

Audience: What is the relationship between compassion and bliss?

Rinpoche: The relationship between compassion and bliss comes through the absolute. ‘*Tong nyi nyin gye nying po che* – the absolute mind of wisdom, the essence of wisdom is combined with compassion.’ So the essence of wisdom is compassion. That does not mean that wisdom is compassion, nor is compassion wisdom. But when compassion is influenced by wisdom, then the essence of compassion becomes wisdom, the essence of wisdom becomes compassion.

Bliss and compassion are not as different as a horse and a cow, but still there is a difference, maybe like goats and sheep or ram and goat. The link between compassion and bliss is wisdom. When compassion and emptiness become one within the individual, then bliss and emptiness within the individual will also automatically become one.<sup>451</sup> But before it becomes one, there is separation. There is not a big separation like between horse and cow, so it is not that they have nothing to do with each other, are completely different, but still within one individual they have separate identities, you can point out, ‘this is compassion, this is wisdom, this is bliss’. Bliss and void are joined together, because intensified wisdom is necessary to cut the root of samsara. Compassion itself does not cut the root of samsara, because it is not the direct opponent of ignorance, therefore it is not the direct antidote. So with regard to compassion, you do not need that much intensification; it is a developing thing, not an intensifying thing. That is the difference; ultimately they will join together, become one within the individual, equally powerful, equally intensified, equally one. That is a different level. When we want to identify them, we see them separately. When we want to join them, we join them together.

*Ordinary mind.* In Tibetan, ordinary mind is *ta mel gi she pa*. In the context of Mahamudra or *dzok chen*, *ta mel gi she pa* does not mean what we just have been talking about.<sup>452</sup> There it refers to an extraordinary pure, naked mind, free of all delusions. I don’t know much about *dzok chen*, but I have read a couple of books. They refer to some kind of pure, primordial first Buddha mind.

But our ordinary primordial mind is a pure mind, too, pure in the sense that it is without delusions, not because delusions have been eradicated, but just because it is without delusions. There is a difference. In the ordinary primordial mind delusions are not eradicated. It is like with illnesses. When you don’t have an illness, that does not mean that illness is eradicated.

Buddha nature is divided into two aspects: 1) the natural Buddha nature; 2) the growing Buddha nature. The growing Buddha nature is what Tsongkhapa has introduced as the seed<sup>453</sup> that will become Buddha. It is the aspect of your own consciousness which will become Buddha. It is like an immature, infant-in-the-womb-type of being. When the seed Buddha-mind has completely matured, then it becomes enlightened mind. That is why it is called growing Buddha potential. The other part is static. The difference is that when you have become enlightened, you cannot go back because the delusions are eradicated.

In ordinary death, you do experience the ordinary primordial pure mind. But it does not last, and ordinary gross minds start growing again. Tsongkhapa made it very clear that the mind at the point of death is neutral, neither positive nor negative, because it is such a subtle mind, too subtle to be identified as either virtuous or non-virtuous. That very subtle mind starts to become less subtle and then it becomes gross and that is how you come out of that state. The instigating factors, *kyen*, cause you to come out of that pure state.

So, in that context, the term *ta mel gi she pa* has been discussed now, although it should really be dealt with at the Mahamudra level. We are touching on some major points of Mahamudra. Basically, the mind which you encounter during the death stage, is called the base pure mind or **base** Mahamudra, or also base Dharmakaya. Through a practice of first opening the central channel, then settling and finally dissolving the energies there, you create the same type of experiences as at the death stage without dying,

<sup>451</sup> Meaning meaning that compassion develops into bliss by applying emptiness-meditation, in the process of which bliss and emptiness become inseparable.

<sup>452</sup> See page 229.

<sup>453</sup> See page 229.

while you are alive. This is the **path** Mahamudra. (You always find base, path and result in Buddhist practice.) So here on the path you create the same eight signals of the death process. Then at the **result** level, when you get the absolute clear light and create the pure illusion body, at that time, going through the pure clear light, you have the same signals and that is the result Mahamudra. The base is that on which you work, the path is the practice that is going on, and the result is what you produce by that.

This is the absolute Vajrayana Mahamudra, whether you name it *ta mel gi she pa* or whatever. Some people call it *ama nasi*; that is again a different way of introducing Mahamudra, the Drukpa Kagyu tradition. I don't remember that very well, so I better keep my mouth shut. Whatever the names and presentations may be, ultimately, if somebody really knows what the actual practice is, for him it will almost become the same. Panchen Lozang Chögyen himself says that. You may call it *dzok chen* or *chak chen* or *ama nasi* or, as in Drikung Kagyu, *nga den* – with five points, or *uma*, ultimately, for someone who really knows the practice, all these systems will go to one point. So that covers the quality of the reality.

## 5. Single-Pointed Requests

*Khyö ni la ma khyö ni yi dham  
khyö ni kha dro chö khyong te  
deng ney zung te jang chup bar du  
kyö min kyap zhan me tsöl way  
di dhang bar do chi me htar yang  
thuk je chak kyü zung dzö la  
Si zhi jik dröl ngö drup kün tsöl  
ten gyi droh dzö bar chö sung*

st. 47. **You are my Lama, you are my Yidam,  
You are my Dakini and Dharma Protector;  
From now until I attain enlightenment,  
I shall seek no refuge other than you.  
In this life, in the bardo, and until enlightenment,  
Please hold me in the hook of your compassion,  
Free me from the fears of samsara and nirvana,  
Grant me all attainments, be my constant companion,  
And protect me from all obstacles. (3x)**

This is very simple. The text says, ‘You are Guru, you are Yidam, you are Buddha, you are Dharma. From today until enlightenment I need no other protection than you!’ That is the single-pointed focus. The other day we talked about the cause of losing one's refuge.<sup>454</sup> So here you say, ‘I seek no refuge other than you.’ It is addressing that problem.

Remember, when Atisha was in Tibet, one of his disciples asked, “How come in India there are so many developed persons while in Tibet we have none?” One of Atisha's replies was:

You Tibetans think that a lama is worse than an ordinary being, so what hope can you have?

Another of his sayings was:

You Tibetans practice a hundred different deities and you don't attain a single one;  
we Indians go only practice a single one and we get hundreds of them.

*Focus on oneness.* That means Tibetans of that time were not focused, but scattered all over. I think that is true, too, for many of us today in the West, because nowadays people try to package all their practices separately: a package of Yamantaka, a package of Tara, a package of Vajrayogini, a package of Heruka and so on. *Lama Chöpa* puts the packages together with the combination of Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang as the primordial Buddha.

Whether you practice the yidams separately or you combine the sadhana with the *Lama Chöpa*, I don't think the combination makes it any shorter; it may cut out at the most a few verses because of

<sup>454</sup> See p. 176.

common dedication and auspiciousness verses. The real point is: all Yidams are manifestations of Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang. Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang *is* the Lama, *is* the Yidam, *is* Vajrayogini, *is* Medicine Buddha, *is* Buddha Shakyamuni, *is* Buddha Vajradhara, *is* Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, *is* Bodhisattva Manjushri and so forth. All of them are one; they are not separate!

So, when you do the Vajrayogini sadhana, you focus on Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang in the form of Vajrayogini. Likewise you focus on Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang in the form of Yamantaka, in the form of Heruka, *etc.* It really is like Atisha said, “We Indians have one deity and we get hundreds of them.” That is the point here. If you keep on separating, if you think there is a Yamantaka separate from Guru Buddha Vajradhara, you’re wrong! If you think there is a Vajrayogini separate from Guru Buddha Vajradhara, wrong! From one, many manifest; from many, all becomes one.

The word *khyap dhah dorje chang* at the beginning of the ‘body mandala’ refers to that<sup>455</sup>. *Khyap dhah* means ‘all-pervasive manifest’, so from one, millions are manifested, and all the millions become one. It is, again, like the one moon with the millions of reflections everywhere, which are all one, again. If you like, you can say it is a trick. If you are serious, I say this is the key, if in a little joking mood, I can say it is a trick.

Whatever you practice, if your energy is focused on oneness, on unity, one deity will become hundreds, as Atisha said. Most of the time in Tibet Atisha was trying to put them together, because there people tended to regard them as separate. That does not mean you can mix their rituals together, like doing half of the Yamantaka sadhana and end with the Vajrayogini sadhana; you can’t. You keep the rituals intact, the paths intact, yet it all comes from one and it all boils down to one. *Lama Chöpa* is really the Vajrayana practice that puts it all together.

*Praying single-pointedly.* So, at this point you have a lot of figures in the field of merit in front of you, there are all these different lineages and all these Yidams. But when you are praying single-pointedly, the focus is on the principal, Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang. It is almost as if you walk towards him and hold his feet. You cannot go and hold him by the chest, that is not appropriate, so the only appropriate thing is to hold his feet.

I told you in India there was somebody who held onto my feet and did not let me go until I promised that they could build a house. Maybe that is just the traditional Indian system. They hold your feet and don’t let go until you promise something. In that manner you hold onto the feet of Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang. Whatever his manifestation, as we have just discussed the reality is the absolute true Lama, the bliss-void Lama, the primordial Lama. Thinking like that, you pray, “You are the Guru, you are the Yidam, you are the Buddha, the Dharma Protector, it is all your manifestation.”

You hold him by the feet and imagine that they actually touch your forehead, you even feel it, and you pray with a single-pointed mind. If you focus half-heartedly it will never work. Ask a seamstress how you can stitch with a two-pronged needle. One will go to this side, the other to that side. It has to be a single-pointed needle in order to stitch well. Like this, only a single-pointed mind can make a single-pointed request, not a half-hearted mind.

The verse itself does not need much explanation. You pray that, “From now on until enlightenment I have no other protector than you.” It is true. During this life, during the bardo, and until the end of the samsaric unenlightened lives you pray to the Lama to hold you in his compassion and deliver you to the ultimate enlightenment. You pray to the Yidam to hold you as the practitioner and give you siddhihood. You pray to the Dakas and Dakinis to be your companions. To the Dharma Protectors you pray to protect you until the end. Then you pray that you may be protected from all obstacles until enlightenment, like those from the elements, illnesses, and most importantly the delusions, so from outer, inner and secret obstacles, so that includes samsara and nirvana.

Remember, Mahayana looks at nirvana as being faulty, too. Although the Buddhist seal or logo says that nirvana is peace, however, we don’t want either extreme. Nirvana is the extreme of peace, samsara is the extreme of busyness. We have to be free from both. So you seek protection from both these extremes and ask to receive all the siddhis.

*Fear of nirvana.* What do you think fear of nirvana really means?

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<sup>455</sup> See page 102.

Audience: Complacency. It is being satisfied with where you are, giving up the Bodhisattva ideal, staying stuck in the great peace that one has received.

Rinpoche: I will not say that the people in nirvana are stuck. They are beyond samsara, free from pain and causes of pain. There is no question that they can maintain that free state. So I will not call that being stuck. However, from the Mahayana point of view they don't do enough. They do not contribute or help much. They are very contented with what they have achieved. From the viewpoint of those who seek total enlightenment, from the point of view of the task that they have set themselves, those who live in the state of nirvana are not of much help. From that angle they are not totally free of fears. It looks like they are afraid that they get sucked in too much. That is why this verse has the line *si zhi jik dröl* – free me from the fears of samsara and nirvana. *Si* is samsara and *zhi* stands for nirvana. *Jik pa* is fear. *Dröl* means to free, to liberate. I have chosen to spend more time on this point because a lot of people may not be familiar with the idea that there is fear in nirvana. Particularly those from the Theravadan background will hit the ceiling if you tell them that there is fear in nirvana. For them nirvana is the ultimate level. Theravada does not talk about the Buddha level at all. Nirvana is the ultimate liberation for them. If you assert that there is fear in nirvana, that is a terrible thing. In the Christian tradition they would say that it is cancer in Christ's body.

Audience: What is the defining difference between nirvana and full enlightenment?

Rinpoche: There are two kinds of obstacles on the path to enlightenment, the delusions and the imprints of delusions. The people in nirvana are free of the delusions, but not of the imprints of the delusions. From the point of view of development of qualities, Buddhahood is total knowledge, but the arhat level is not. It is simply free from samsara. Have they seen the emptiness? Yes, they have. Are they Bodhisattvas? No. Do they have compassion? Sure. Do they care? Yes, they do. Do they commit themselves? No, they don't. They sympathize with you, give you affection and care about you, but will they do something? If it is convenient, yes. Otherwise, they won't. Their viewpoint is that it is not their business. They wish you well, but will they go out of their way to do something? No, because it is not their concern, not their business. That is where you draw the line. The idea of smaller vehicle and large vehicle comes through the difference in attitude at that level. From the Mahayana point of view that is fear. If you hold back because it is not your business, that is very fearsome. Before the bodhimind there is one stage which is called *special mind* or, in Tibetan *lhag sam*. The arhats do have compassion, even great compassion, no doubt. People who say that the arhats don't have compassion are absolutely wrong. However, there is no commitment. That is the difference. Buddhas normally don't go for lunch. Arhats do. To the Bodhisattvas that is fearsome. If you have developed such capacities and you do nothing, that is a tremendous waste.

Audience: Just to clarify, are you saying that from our perspective we develop a fear that we might lose our way and not fulfill our commitment and just work for nirvana, or do the arhats in that state of nirvana, experience some kind of subtle fear?

Rinpoche: No, I don't think they experience anything. The fear is from the general view. It is frightening to go that way. There are different systems about whether the ultimate development has to go in one direction or whether there are three final levels. If it is three it doesn't matter. The arhats have done their job, they are in peace, the deal is done, fine. That is the end. But if, as the Mahayana says, there is only one ultimate yana, then the arhats are in a bit of trouble. They don't have pain or problems, they don't have a strong motivation to move towards helping others. They are tremendously lacking in altruistic activities. That is fearsome, because it keeps them distant from the enlightened level that they will ultimately reach. It is fearsome in general, because they have such tremendous capacities, but they are not using them and that is such a huge waste of resources. Only the Mahayana texts will talk about fear in nirvana. The arhats will give you total sympathy. They will say, 'I appreciate what you are going through, I know, because I have been there. I am aware of that, but I am not going to go out of my way to do anything.'

Audience: Conservative compassion!

Rinpoche: All right, very conservative on compassion.

*Realms and fall-back.* Audience: What then is the difference between nirvana and a god realm?



Rinpoche: The difference is that beings in the god realms will fall back into lower states, but arhats will not fall back. Actually, once you reach the path of action or preparation you go through four stages, heat, peak, patience and best of Dharma. It is said,

*Sö tob nyien dro yang mi tong*

At the level of patience you will not fall into the lower realms ever again

When on the path of seeing you reach the level of an arya you will no longer have gross suffering, like illnesses, ageing, death. You will no longer take uncontrolled rebirth through the power of karma and delusions. You do take rebirth with karma and choice. Samsaric gods don't reach to any of those levels and therefore will fall back.

Arhats on the other hand have gone way beyond these levels. The Hinayana path goes through the levels of stream enterer, once returner, no more returner and arhat. The path of seeing is probably between the once returner and no-more-returner levels. The level of no-more returner corresponds more or less with the path of meditation. The path of seeing corresponds with the level of a once returner. Arhats have gone way beyond these levels.

Samsaric gods are returnable. I don't know if you get your money back, but they will return.

*Focus singlepointedly.* So, you focus strongly and single-pointedly make your request. You find the same things at the end of this lineage prayer.<sup>456</sup> All of them go together. This is one little key that opens all doors, like the master key that hotels have to open all rooms. It is the main key and it gives you the main message: all the packages look like separate packages but all are one. Among the Gurus it is the same thing, all are the primordial Guru.

It is important here to also visualize when you make requests and supplication. It is almost like you are holding the feet of the lama. It is the eastern culture to very politely hold on to the feet of the one whom you are praising and seeking protection from. In our culture you would probably catch that person by the chest and pull them round to you and talk to them, 'Hey, you are the Buddha, you are the Yidam' and all this. This is known as *pu tsuk som dem*, single-pointedly making your request clearly to the objects of refuge. It is not that they have deaf ears, but from our point of view we have to make sure we make ourselves clear and make sure this works and do our best to guarantee it will function in that way.

*Bardo.* Do you need more explanation about the bardo? This verse refers to *in this life, the bardo and until enlightenment*. As long as the perception we have at present exists, that is this life. Change of life means change of perception. Today's perception is this life's perception. The perception we have today will stop at death. That means that the perception through the means of this body stops. You are left with pure energy and mind. The Tibetans will not refer to energy, but will call it 'air'. It is the same basis on which you get the bardo or the illusion body. It is the condition on the basis on which you can get the clear light. It is the pure energy-mind level. The physical body is gone. There is still a body but it is purely energy-mind. The state in between, until you get another physical body is called 'bardo'.

Many people will tell you that this life itself is also bardo, because it is crazy, hallucinating, *etc.* It is also a stage in between, in this case, between life and death. However, we want to focus on the state between death and birth. In the bardo you only have an energy/mind body. This, however, is much more sensitive and capable of perception than we are in this life. We can be very sensitive even now. Think about this: If you are slightly high on whatever substance, how clear for example sounds can become.

I once had an experience of taking some *bang*, which is hashish. In the next room people were talking and it sounded as if they were right inside my ear. That clarity and sensitivity is possible within the body. When that is gone, the sensitivity is a thousand times greater than what we can experience here. It is so sensitive that it experiences a little wind as if it was a terrible typhoon. Heat, cold, like, dislike, comfort, discomfort, and so on is intensified a million times. You have to think that this individual is none other than me. And that happens exactly at the time when I disconnect from this particular body. It is not very far away, it is just a minute here and there. It is not that it takes a long time to get used to. That is why it is called 'narrow passage of the bardo'. When you go through that there is tremendous fear and threat and suffering, torture.

<sup>456</sup> This body of mine and your Body, O Spiritual Father, This speech of mine and your Speech, O Spiritual Father, This mind of mine and your Mind, O Spiritual Father, Through your blessings may they become inseparably one.

Truly speaking, the future life can be even more difficult and more complicated than the bardo. But there is a little gap. The bardo, however, is right under our nose. It is only a matter of seconds. When the air we are breathing in now, comes in less and goes out more a few times and then finally goes out in one big breath, we will experience the bardo right then and there. All these extremely sensitive experiences will begin right there. It is not very far.

That is why we pray to the Lama and the Supreme Field of Merit, not only for this life, but also for the bardo and the life thereafter, until we are totally free on the level of enlightenment. It is important to have a very strong focus on that. You make this request three times in that manner.

## VI SEEKING BLESSINGS

REVIEW OF THE FIRST OUTLINES; SOME ADDITIONAL REMARKS

Source<sup>457</sup>

In brief, this lineage has been continuous from Buddha to my late master Kyabje Trijang Dorjechang.

This teaching tradition comes in particular from Manjushri. That is why it is called *Ganden nying gyü*, the whispered, *nying*, tradition, *gyü*, said to be ‘what Manjushri whispered in Tsongkhapa’s ear’. That is not to be taken literally, but it indicates its value: it is not available everywhere, not for sale in the open market, but is of exclusive quality, only available in the high-class, quality stores. The word ‘whispered’ is used here to show that. So the lineage came from Buddha to Tsongkhapa, particularly spiced up by Manjushri.

From Tsongkhapa to Dharmavajra, it was an oral tradition only with nothing written down. Finally, Panchen Lozang Chögyen composed this *Lama Chöpa*, showing the main points plus adding up different spices; he made it available in poetry form, readable in forty minutes.

Though the *Lama Chöpa* is connected with Vajrayana, everybody can say it, whether monk or layperson, whether you have received initiation or not. In Tibet, we had to memorize it as small children, before we could read, by repeating after somebody. So it is both open and restricted.<sup>458</sup> You know why? Because when you just say it, you only get the words, not the essence. If you have inside information, then when you say the words you remember and see how important it is.

Last year<sup>459</sup> I mainly based my explanations on the commentary by Yongzin Kachen Yeshe Gyeltsen,<sup>460</sup> teacher of the Eighth Dalai Lama and founder of the Tse Chok Ling retreat center, across the river from Lhasa. I received this teaching at that very place from Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche, based on this commentary by this Yongzin Yeshe Gyeltsen.<sup>461</sup> At that time we went through the complete commentary, but last year I just picked out things here and there. I also used the *Kachem Lung*,<sup>462</sup> a commentary by Geshe Tsultrim Nyima, a teacher from Drepung Loseling. This year<sup>463</sup>, I am mostly using Ngulchu Dharmabhadra’s *Lama Chöpa* commentary.

Kachen Yeshe Gyeltsen’s commentary gives a tremendous number of sources and explains why this teaching is important, the *Kachem Lung* gives you a lot of inside information and Ngulchu gives the word by word commentary. So over these two years we have had the essence information, the hidden teachings, and the word explanation, more or less complete. I have also passed on to you most of the hidden information, however we do not announce “This is hidden information.” The reason why we do not is to be careful on Vajrayana downfall number seven: losing secrecy. If you say that something is hidden information, everybody naturally will look for that particular part and nothing else. That way it becomes very public.

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<sup>457</sup> Also see page 14.

<sup>458</sup> As a maha anutara yoga practice it is restricted, as a prayer, it is open.

<sup>459</sup> 1994.

<sup>460</sup> *A Commentary of Lama Chöpa, Revealing the Secret; The Treasury of Ear-Whispered Instructions.*

<sup>461</sup> Yongzin Yeshe Gyeltsen is the same person as Kachen Yeshe Gyeltsen. Yongzin is a title and refers to being a teacher of a Dalai Lama.

<sup>462</sup> *Throwing to the Winds the Legacy of Oral Instruction.*

<sup>463</sup> 1995.

Even in the eighteen volumes of the collected works of Tsongkhapa, the secret teachings which are included throughout, are never explicitly labeled as such. Similarly, these last two years you have received a number of these teachings, though this was not mentioned explicitly.

*Who is Fit to Practice*<sup>464</sup>

None other than someone like us. Why? Because we have the qualities for it. We have the eighteen qualities of fortunate human life. We have taken basic refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. We have met the great teaching tradition of Tsongkhapa. We have received the perfect initiation of one or more of the Yidams of highest yoga tantra, such as Yamantaka, Heruka, Guhyasamaja. That is why someone like us is the 'who'.

We normally don't appreciate enough the opportunity and the quality of our life. Even if sometimes we do appreciate the opportunity and want to take advantage of it, too often we just can't do it. Some people are too busy and find it impossible to manage. Some people couldn't care less, can't be bothered. And some people would like to do it, have the time, take the time off to come here on retreat, and even then can't manage. They just can't do it, even if they force themselves in. Whether the time is not right or they don't have the proper karmic link to be able to practice Vajrayana or whatever, they just cannot manage.

Then, of course I am also very much aware of people who, for whatever reasons, jumped into the Vajrayana too quickly or too early. They will also find it extremely difficult. But even with these difficulties some people manage and can survive. Some just cannot and it has become absolutely clear that even though we try to do a little bit of controlling and helping to manage well, they will have these difficulties.

But for those of us who have gone through and managed well and who don't have difficulties, who feel at home and are able to practice, it is really fortunate. I think looking back we have to congratulate ourselves. This is not a pep talk. It is really true, it is the reality, it is dealing with our lives, that is what is happening. We have seen it ourselves, many of you with your personal experiences, and when you look right and left, everybody has difficulties and somehow you are still in here and it is now your home.

It is also very important to note for the future, for the younger generations and others who are joining now, that in Vajrayana, people have to be very careful and have to get in very slowly. Basically, they must have firm grounding in the paths common with the lower level, common with the medium level, and the Mahayana paths. When they really are stable and Lamrim makes a difference in their lives, when they are comfortable and feel good about it, then is the time to begin carefully to introduce them to Vajrayana. You people here are the first generation of Vajrayana practitioners and I think we are not doing badly at all. Each and every one of us has come through with sometimes a long face and sometimes a smiling face. I was just reflecting on a couple of people who just kept on crying all the time during the last two or three winter retreats and had to leave, because it was literally impossible for them to stay and continue. Some others just managed. This is what I have been reflecting on. That really tells you whether the time was right or not. That's why those of us who are feeling at home and comfortable, perhaps are the ones who are fit to practice.

## 1. Seeking Blessings to Receive the Four Initiations<sup>465</sup>

*de tar lan sum söl wa tap pei thü  
la may ku sung thuh kyi nay nam lay  
dü tsi ö zer kar mar thing ga sum  
rim dang chik char jung ne dhah nyi kyi  
  
Nay sum rim dhang chik char thim pa lay  
drip zhi dag ching nam dhah wang zhi top  
ku zhi thop ching la ma nyi pa zhik  
gye zhin thim pay jin gyi lap par gyur.*

<sup>464</sup> Also see page 32.

<sup>465</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 195-200; Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 132-137.

- st. 48     **By the force of making these requests three times,  
Light rays and nectars, white, red and cobalt blue,  
Stream forth from the centers of my Lama's body, speech and mind.**
- st. 49     **One by one and all together my four obstacles are purified,  
I receive the four empowerments  
And the seeds of the four Buddha bodies.  
A duplicate of my Lama happily dissolves into me,  
And I am blessed with inspiration.**

As a result of making the single-pointed request three times, the four initiations are given to you. The vase initiation purifies. In Sutrayana we purify the negative emotions. In vajrayana we purify ordinary appearance and especially accepting the ordinary appearance as reality. You may wonder why. Vajrayana is called result-oriented practice. That means, we try to function as though we are already there. We pretend to be there. Which means, not being there becomes an obstacle. At the result level, whatever we experience is pure and wonderful – pure environment and pure deity appearance. It is not just experience; it is reality ‘as it is’. We call it pure being, pure environment, enlightenment, sambogakaya, because at the result level that is what it is supposed to be. At the same time, the result of negativities and negative emotions is impure things, so that is what we purify. In this result-oriented practice of the vase initiation the negativities are considered to be washed away by water. So, when we obtain this initiation are they really purified then? Probably not; 99.9% no. That is why at the initiation you are told to at least for a moment think you are purified. That provides a basis for it. That is also transforming impure into pure.

By the secret initiation, by tasting the secret material, our energy becomes pure. By the third initiation, the wisdom initiation, by the hook of joy our mind is picked up and taken it into the sphere of joy. The fourth initiation is the true introduction to the union and what you clear here is the doubt of enlightenment. This is basically what the four initiations are all about.

If you want to go in detail, there are three or four ways of taking these four initiations (not empowerments!). There is a long, detailed way in some longer *Lama Chöpas*, which allows you to bring in self-initiation, and there is a medium way, too. We will talk here about the way that is easiest, shortest, and most appropriate for us.

At the crown, the white letter OM represents the pure part of form or body, the eastern Buddha, Vairochana. The pure part of speech or sound is the western Buddha, Amitabha. (He must be living in Canada, America or Europe, maybe in California!) He is represented by the red letter AH at throat level. The pure part of mind, encompassing all wisdom, is the central Buddha, Akshobya, represented by a blue letter HUM at the heart. (In Tibetan tradition the mind or basis of consciousness is believed to be located at the heart rather than the brain.) The seed syllables OM AH HUM always represent those three Buddhas. Since the same five Buddhas are already there as part of the ‘body mandala’, you have to put extra ones here.

If you want to go into detail you can proceed as is usual in initiations. Light goes out from the heart of Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang, and invites the initiation deities who give all four initiations: the vase initiation, the secret initiation, the wisdom initiation and the word initiation. If you do that every day, the continuation of the stream of initiations is preserved. That is a quality you find mentioned in many different teachings. After Kedrub Je, one of Tsongkhapa’s disciples, received a Yamantaka initiation from Tsongkhapa, from then on he continued to do the self-initiation of Yamantaka every day and used to brag about the river of initiations continuing.

If you can’t go in that much detail, just taking the four initiations in combination with *Lama Chöpa* practice will serve the purpose of continuing the stream of initiation. Those of you who are doing the long Vajrayogini sadhana every day can do the four initiations in combination with that. But you don’t have to do it in two practices, one is enough. It is not compulsory to do it, but still, it is good. There is a separate little teaching on the four initiations.

The simple way is as follows: From crown, throat, and heart, from the letters OM AH HUM white, red and royal or navy blue light and liquid come out. They come one by one. The first is the vase initiation, then the secret initiation, then the wisdom initiation. Then all three combined together constitute the fourth initiation.

The light and nectar reach your own crown, throat, and heart in the same sequence as they are generated by the Lama. By dissolving them to yourself separately and then together you obtain the four initiations.

You don't necessarily have to have a vase for the vase initiation; this white light and liquid from the OM will do. You don't necessarily have to have the consort-union for the secret initiation. Basically, red, the color of attachment, corresponds really well with the secret initiation. The wisdom initiation corresponds very well with the mind at the heart level. The word initiation is actually the introduction of the union, so all three together, simultaneously. It is not ordinary male and female union, if you are thinking of that, but the union of the ultimate male and ultimate female. The ultimate female is the clear light and the ultimate male is the illusion body. That is why the illusion body is so handsome. Get the picture of Mr. Handsome or Prince Charming, that is the illusion body. The ultimate clear light is Cinderella. Cinderella rises by yourself within you.

Talking about the four initiations, the Vajrayogini initiation is actually called 'Vajrayogini blessing,' because the four initiations there are in a very short form, more a blessing of body and mind, without all the elaborate eleven parts of the five Buddhas initiations. Therefore, it does not count as a complete initiation of maha anu yoga tantra. For that simple reason, one has to receive another maha anu yoga initiation before receiving Vajrayogini, preferably Heruka, but if not, then Yamantaka or Hevajra or even Kalachakra.

As for Kalachakra, in my time in the late 50s, both Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche and Kyabje Ling Rinpoche used to advise people not to take it, because many would try to get Vajrayogini, saying that they had received Kalachakra. Then the next question would be whether they had received any other maha anu yoga initiation and if they had not, it was suggested to take another one. The Kalachakra is done in such a huge, elaborate way and there are so many hundreds and thousands of people attending, maybe that is why. But then, I did not notice that was happening in India. If you make it a little restricted and conservative, we would say you should have another initiation, but if you are liberal, and we are more or less liberal, we do accept it. For all practical purposes, the Vajrayogini is a full initiation, but for people newly taking initiation, it might not serve the purpose. It does however serve the purpose of purifying the vows.

Audience: What happens when you forget to take the four initiations a couple of times? Does the river of initiations stop then?

Audience: No, then it is frozen!

Rinpoche: And when the heat comes, it will run again.

Audience: (...)

Rinpoche: In some other practices the four initiations may be given via the five chakras but here it is done with only the three chakras. The text only mentions three, and you just follow the practice. That's why in the Ganden Kagyu tradition it is considered very important to follow the text. You find every Gelugpa lama, when teaching, holding a text and trying to follow it through. So just follow the system. At your crown, the essence of the body is the letter OM, the essence of speech at your throat is the letter AH. The essence of your mind is the letter HUM. These are your three points. The same goes for the lama in his own respective areas. From there comes light and nectar, in reality inseparable bliss-void, in the colors of white, red and cobalt blue.

### *Visualization on the Four Initiations*

The first initiation:

**White** light comes from the white letter **OM** at the Lama's **forehead** and reaches and dissolves to your forehead. You receive the **vase** initiation. All negativities committed through the **body** are purified. You are empowered to meditate on the **development** stage. The seed of the **Nirmanakaya** is planted.

The second initiation:

**Red** light comes from the red letter **AH** at the **throat** of the Lama and is received at your throat level. You receive the **secret** initiation. Your negativities in general are purified, particularly the

ones committed through **speech**, such as lying, *etc.* You are empowered to meditate on the **illusion body** level of the completion stage. This also plants the seed of **Sambhogakaya**.

The third initiation:

**Bluish** light and nectar from the blue letter **HUM** at the **heart** of the Lama reaches and dissolves to your heart. The **wisdom** initiation is received. All your negativities in general are purified, particularly those committed through **mind**, such as meanness. This empowers you to meditate on the absolute **clear light** and plants the seed of the **Dharmakaya**.

The fourth initiation:

From all three places of the Lama you receive all the three different-colored lights and nectars, which come to you together and dissolve to your three places simultaneously. You receive the fourth initiation, the **word** initiation, the introduction to the **union**, the combination of body and mind. The obstructions of body, speech and mind and their combination, all four are purified. The seed of the **Nature Kaya** is planted.<sup>466</sup>

So the fourth one purifies negativities created by body, mind and speech together. We receive all four complete initiations and attain the seeds of all the four bodies: Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, Nirmanakaya and the Nature Kaya, or *Svabhavikakaya* (Tibetan: *ngo wo nyi ku* or *rang zhin cho kyi ku*). The Nature Kaya is Buddha Vajradhara's nature, the primordial reality which we talked about before.<sup>467</sup> (Audience: Super kaya!) That is how you obtain the four kayas.

So, this practice purifies the four negativities, gives the four initiations, and also purifies all five skandhas, develops the five wisdoms, plants the seed of the four kayas *etc.*, the same as in initiations; all that is applicable here.

Remember, you yourself are still in the form of Yamantaka. You had generated yourself in the form of Yamantaka in the beginning of the practice. After you have received all these initiations, finally,

Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang is extremely pleased at these activities I have engaged in, and to express that, he sends us a duplicate of himself.

This is very similar to the *Six-session Yoga*. In each of the first five sessions, you receive a duplicate of Buddha Vajradhara, and only at the last one does Buddha Vajradhara actually dissolve to you. At this point of the practice, you haven't completed all your activities yet. You still have to review the stages of the path. That's why a duplicate is used here instead of dissolving the actual Supreme Field of Merit. So a duplicate Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang comes to your crown or to your forehead, whichever place you prefer, it does not matter.

What happens then is similar to the place in the Vajrayogini practice where the Lama becomes a light ball about the size of a bird egg. It might not be a bad idea to shrink the duplicate of Lozang Dorjechang, in the nature of light, to about an inch in size.

He dissolves to me and we become one. He becomes oneness with my mind, my body and my emotions. (In America, we particularly need the emotions to be in balance. )

This is an important point: the primordial mind or actual Lama's mind, your own consciousness, and that of the Yidam become inseparable. The absolute Lama, your own consciousness, and that of the Yidam, whatever your practice might be, become one. The lama is also not forced to stay, but is happily and joyfully staying.

There is a certain little confidential, more restricted teaching on this. It is called 'Rising the illusion body within yourself'<sup>468</sup>. I just want to mention that this teaching is there. We will gradually have to pick it up rather than going into it right now, while the tape recorder is running and everything will be transcribed. These things are there. Not even a word of them is mentioned, either in the *Lama Chöpa* text or in the commentaries. That's why I have been circling around it.

<sup>466</sup> Sometimes Rinpoche uses here the word 'ultimate Buddhahood'. Gehlek Rimpoche, *Ganden Lha Gyema*, p. 68.

<sup>467</sup> See p. 227, 230.

<sup>468</sup> Sermey Khensur Lobsang Tharchin Tharchin, *Six-session Guru Yoga*, p. 75-76.

When the duplicate Lama dissolves to you and you (both your own consciousness and that of the Yidam) become one with the consciousness of the actual Lama, you should focus carefully on that oneness, that unity. This unified mind should recognize emptiness and also be full of joy. That's how you receive blessings. That is really the meaning of 'joyful' here in this verse, 'Out of delight, an emanation of the lama dissolves into me...'

At a Vajrayana week-end we gave people a hand out of the four initiations and the obstacles that are purified thereby, quoting from the Guhyasamaja tantra. You really get the initiation by clearing the four obstacles. You also lay the seed of the four kayas.

*Excerpt of initiation preparation text:*

The doorway to Vajrayana practice is the initiation. Vajrayana is divided into four tantras: kriya, charya, yoga and maha anu yoga tantra. Kriya, charya and yoga tantras have two initiations – water and crown. Maha-anu-yoga has four categories.

The first is the vase initiation. It is called vase initiation because a vase holds water and water is for cleansing. The water is actually an enlightened being in the form of water, which washes away negativity in general and specifically, ordinary perception and conception. Within the initiation (depending on which initiation it is) there are about a dozen sub-categories including an introduction to the five Buddha families. Each of the sub-initiations are concluded with water, by being sprinkled, touched with the vase, by drinking, or all three.

During the initiation, we take many vows in the presence of the Lama, Yidam, and Mandala. Committing to and honoring these vows are the basis on which the individual develops attainments. By taking the river-like vase initiation, we hope and pray to wash away ordinary perception and conceptualization.

The second is the secret initiation. By tasting the wisdom nectar of the secret initiation, our sound, speech and energy may become mantras.

The third is the wisdom initiation. By experiencing the wisdom/joy nectar, we are connected to the joy that will be the method to deliver our minds to the nature of clear light.

The word [or fourth] initiation will introduce union and in that way, we will clear all misunderstanding and doubts of purpose and meaning.

You are entering into the mandala of the five Buddha families, of which each carries its own commitment. Many of these commitments are combined in the practice of the six-session guru yoga, which is the most important daily commitment for Vajrayana practitioners and can be done in two or multiple sessions.

There is sometimes a sadhana commitment as well which focuses on the developmental stage of the practice. By generating oneself in the form of the yidam one is familiarized with the three types of manifestations. The Dharmakaya, or natural form, introduces the ordinary stages of death as an opportunity to make use of the basic phenomena of primordial enlightened mind. The Sambhogakaya form is an exclusive body that has its own qualities that are only accessible to a certain category of beings, teachings and time. The Nirmanakaya manifestation is accessible to all, as in the appearance of the historical Buddha.

*Guru Mantras*

After the Lama merges with your own consciousness in the form of a letter HUM at your heart<sup>469</sup>, you dissolve into emptiness and then once again arise as Yamantaka.

At your heart level, on sun and moon discs you have a letter HUM. It is surrounded by OM AH HUM and the guru mantras up to the mantra of your root master, which is a golden-red color:<sup>470</sup>

<sup>469</sup> Also see: Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 133.



OM AH GURU VAJRADHARA JINA SHASANA SUKALYANA VIJAYA SARVA SIDDHI HUM HUM

In my case, of course, I use the mantra of Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche, golden-yellow:

OM AH GURU VAJRADHARA SUMATI JNANA SHASANA DHARA SAMUDRA IDDHI HUM HUM

In a circle within that mantra you can have Tsongkhapa's mantra, golden-red:

OM AH GURU VAJRADHARA SUMATI KIRTI SIDDHI HUM HUM

What you really need to have within this is Buddha Shakyamuni's golden-yellow mantra:

OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNIYE SVAHA

The innermost mantra, blue in color, is:

OM AH VAJRADHARA HUM

Finally you have in white, red and blue:

OM AH HUM, OM AH HUM, OM AH HUM

OM AH HUM is the common mantra of the primordial Guru, primordial Buddha, primordial Yidam, primordial Dharma, primordial Sangha, Dakas, Dakinis, everybody.

In reciting the Guru mantras go backwards rather than forwards: first your direct Guru, then, if you want to, you don't have to, his or her Guru, then Tsongkhapa, *etc.* As you recite these mantras, the outer ones dissolve to the inner ones, and finally OM AH HUM dissolves to you. If you don't say the mantras, nothing is missing, however it is recommended. If you want to say the mantra of your guru, go ahead and do it. Actually guru mantras are sometimes great. But before you say my mantra, you would be better off saying the *Migtsema*. However, I know one important thing about the guru mantra in connection with my father, Demo Rinpoche.

*Demo Rinpoche.* He was a very interesting person. I do have a completely different way of thinking about my father than anyone of you with your fathers. He was great, whatever he did. He was so powerful. He was almost like the ruler of all the spirits and Dharma protectors in Tibet. A number of people who have known my father and with whom I have had discussions on this issue all say that if my father was alive now, there would never be any protector controversy at all. And that is definitely true. Every single protector that would come into a trance, from Nechung to every single local village protector who comes into trance, all of them would just simply shiver in front of my father. They would never be able to function very well, no matter how big and powerful they might be. He had that quality.

He also had a tremendous power of healing. Tibet had a very bad health system. So that was helpful. Then he was very good at influencing the weather. On top of that he kept himself busy working on cars. He used to completely dismantle them, put all the nuts and bolts in one heap and then try to figure out how it all works. The jeeps and cars would always move again. The Nepalese, Indians, Chinese and Mongolians used to get along very well with him. They have some idea about mechanical things and he used to enjoy doing that. He used to work on his cars while dozens of people were waiting to see him to receive healing treatment. But he was so busy with his mechanical jobs that some people were not able to see him for two or three days. They would show up again the next day.

But he was like that. A number of people, including myself and Sekong Tsenshab Rinpoche, Lochö Rinpoche and Rilbur Rinpoche, asked him how he did all this healing and weather making. He answered, 'I just simply say my guru mantra and hope for the best.' I don't really know, but maybe his guru devotional practice has that much power.

<sup>470</sup> Clarification of Rinpoche's mantra by Aura: 'Gehlek Rinpoche has two different names 1) Gyeltsen Gehlek Namgyal, childhood name given by Pabongka Rinpoche. 2) Later it changed to Ngawang Gehlek Trinley Namgyal, name given by the Tibetan regent Takdrak Rinpoche when Rinpoche took his full monk's vows, at the age of seven. Nyare Kentul is not a name; it is a title meaning 'reincarnation of the Nyare Kamtse abbot. The mantra used here 'Jina Sashana...' refers to the translation of the first name; the other one 'Vagindra...' is the translation of the second name. Translation of the mantra used here: JINA = *Gyeltsen* = Buddhadharmā; SASHANA = *Ge* = Auspicious Virtue; SUKALYANA = *lek* = Joy; VIJAYA = *Namgyal* = Victor; SARWA SIDDHI = all the siddhis. So Rinpoche's mantra OM AH GURU VAJRADHARA JINA SASHANA SUKALYANA VIJAYA SARWA SIDDHI HUM HUM] says: OM, AH, You who are Guru Vajradhara, Buddhadharmā, Auspicious Joy, Victor, bestow on us all virtues, all victory and all attainments, HUM HUM'.

His Holiness' sister was extremely sick once and all the doctors could not do anything, including some western doctors who were in Tibet at the time because of the Indian mission and the Chinese mission. My father received an order from the Dalai Lama's government: 'Cure his sister!' One of the managers came with a horse and invited him to come with him. So he went. He only stayed two or three minutes and then came back. She had terrible pain, but after he had been so see her, the pain went away. She saw him out of her house personally at the end of his visit. It was like an aspirin. Later, she died of stomach cancer. Perhaps that was the beginning of the cancer and through the mantra her life was prolonged by about a decade or something. Again, when we asked him what he did to the Dalai Lama's sister, he just said, 'I said my guru mantra, nothing else.' So sometimes that it helpful. However, all the qualities are with the Migtsema which is the real, true guru mantra.

#### *Combining Lama Chöpa with a Sadhana*<sup>471</sup>

If you want to combine your sadhana with the Lama Chöpa, this is the time where you combine all the yidam practices and say the mantras. If you want to do a little sadhana here and you don't want to do all the preliminaries, you can insert your sadhana into the *Lama Chöpa*. You can check in the long prayer at the end of the Long Yamantaka sadhana what the essence of the sadhana has to be. Look at the following verses from that prayer:

The great radiance of the heart of the Perfect Hero  
Invites the Field of Accumulation, which pervades the sky;  
By delighting this Field with the purest offerings, praises  
And practice, may totally complete the great collections of merit.

This verse and the ones above summarize the seven purities in the beginning of the sadhana.

Having with stainless reason examined the meaning of the mantra  
And having with awareness which is sure of the profound emptiness,  
Strongly established the pride of the Dharmakaya,  
May I become habituated with the peerless wisdom.

The meaning of the sadhana, as explained in that prayer, begins here. In case of Yamantaka it is very easy to work out the whole sadhana from that prayer. This verse explains the Dharmakaya part. The sadhana really begins there. If you want to follow the shorter versions of the Yamantaka sadhana you can skip the next verse in the long prayer which is talking about the protection realms:

By the absorption of the Ten Wrathful ones,  
The great glaring Ones who abide in the Fiercely-blazing Wheel  
The trunk and limbs of darkness are torn out from their very roots.  
May I too come to possess this power.

This verse gives you the common and uncommon protection wheels. Then comes the generating of the mandala: 'In the centre of this mighty wrathful wheel...' That also may or may not be necessary. Then comes the Sambhogakaya Manjushri which is necessary:

In the centre of the palace is a mandala of air  
On which firmly rests a moon;  
Seated there is Manjushri having a luminous body;  
By constantly meditating upon him  
May I become free from the impure Intermediate State  
And attain the Sambhogakaya.

Then comes the generating of the Nirmanakaya along with the gross and subtle development stage:

By perfecting the yogas of the coarse and subtle development stage  
Wherein the form of the Vajra Bhairava is actualized  
From the wrathful vajra that arises out of the seed syllable  
Which rests on the sun that consumes the myriads of preconceptions,  
May I experience the dance of the Nirmanakaya  
That has abandoned all impure rebirth.

<sup>471</sup> Also see p. 210 and the Vajrayana Prayer book

Up to here the verses of the prayer cover the development stage along with offerings and praises, which covers the four branches, as we have discussed them already at the level of the Migtsema.<sup>472</sup> If you are saying the four-line sadhana it just says there that the four branches may be completed, but if you can think about it, these are the four branches.

Then you would say the mantras. You can say most sadhanas this way, except the Heruka body mandala. That would be taking too much advantage of short cuts. Anyway, the four-line sadhanas are just meant for emergencies.

*Dissolving.* There are then two basic systems of dissolving. One is called *je zhig* and the other *rig dzin*. The *rig dzin* is just dissolving into blue light and emerging from there as whatever your next movement is. With that I mean your next sadhana, if you are doing them back to back. In that case you would for example dissolve into blue light and then you would shift your focus back to the Supreme Field of Merit where light comes from in general and especially from Vajrayogini. The light reaches to yourself, your mind becomes void nature of Dharmakaya, then Sambhogakaya-red light, then Nirmanakaya as the complete appearance of Vajrayogini with mandala or solitary, with or without body mandala. In case of Vajrayogini and other mother tantras you don't have the four branches. That is why the four-line sadhana of Vajrayogini only says, 'which enjoys enlightenment', instead of 'completing the four branches.' Then you say the three-OM mantra of Vajrayogini and then dissolve yourself and the mandala into light form, gradually, in detail, or simply become red light and re-arise as Vajrayogini.<sup>473</sup>

These short-cuts are not meant for every day practice. If you just do that all the time, substituting for your sadhanas, it would not be right and would not serve any purpose. We already have very short sadhanas. However, rather than breaking commitments in emergency situations, you can say these four-line ones back to back and say as many mantras as you have given a commitment for. It is like when the electricity fails, the emergency system comes in.

I don't think the four-line sadhanas can stand alone. They are meant to be done in conjunction with the Lama Chöpa. For Yamantaka you would have to at least include the verse from the long prayer which starts with 'The great radiance of the heart of the perfect hero...'

*Sadhana-structure.* The people who compose sadhanas have a few little systems and the rituals have to go according to those. It begins with the guru-lineage prayers, then self-generation, blessings, then the seven limbs or rather seven purities, as they are called in Vajrayana, which is the accumulation of relative merit. Then you accumulate the wisdom merit in combination with the Dharmakaya. After that you generate the mandala, environment and inhabitants. You make offerings, say praises, say mantras and related activities, do your focusing meditation on it, while contemplating the meaning of the appearance of the deity. In case of Yamantaka, you would think about why there are two horns, sixteen legs, etc. If he is solitary you think about where the bliss is coming from and for Vajrayogini, why in her case the vajra holder is still there [although she appears as single deity]. Finally you do the dissolution, make tormas offerings and prayers and auspicious verses.

Basically that is the system. If you know that, you can elaborate on it or shorten it or whatever. You know the mechanism. If we don't know that we can't change anything around, but simply have to follow whatever was taught very closely.

If you are doing the Vajrayogini sadhana on its own in short form, you would have to do it similarly. Look into the long prayer at the end of the long Vajrayogini sadhana and you can see it.

Audience: Could you also do the medium size sadhana in conjunction with the Lama Chöpa?

Rinpoche: You can. If you can do the short ones, why not the longer ones? In Vajrayogini, if you want to do it with the Lama Chöpa, you would skip the first five yogas and begin with the sixth, the self generation as the yidam. That itself begins with the Dharmakaya meditation. Then do the 7<sup>th</sup> yoga, purification of all beings, then the 8<sup>th</sup> yoga of blessing, then the 9<sup>th</sup> yoga of verbal and mental recitation. Then the 10<sup>th</sup> yoga is the dissolution, but you can't do the complete dissolution, because then you would also close the Supreme Field of Merit up there and that would be a problem. The same would be true if you dissolve

<sup>472</sup> P. 212.

<sup>473</sup> For the text of the four-line sadhanas, see p. 211.

your Yamantaka mandala. So, if you can't adjust, it is better to follow Pabongka's direct instructions and sit down and get up as he tells us.

Remember again, the four-line sadhanas are only meant for emergency. You are missing a lot of things in there. Each sadhana carries a lot of its own practices. We are just trying to get a minimum practice together by which you avoid breaking your commitment. So skipping tormas offerings and so on is okay for a day or so, if it is an emergency situation. Doing what is beneficial and just avoid breaking your commitment are two different points. Of course it is more beneficial to do the longer, complete sadhanas.

Audience: To me it seems like we are cheating.

Rinpoche: No, you are not, you are almost cheating. But you are not missing anything, you do everything as part of the four branches in very short form.

Audience: Can you insert your sadhana practices into the Ganden Lha Gyema, instead of the Lama Chöpa?

Rinpoche: I don't know, nobody told me. I also have never read that anywhere. So I don't think so. Besides that, in Ganden Lha Gyema, there is only Tsongkhapa and his two disciples. All these other yidams are not in there. So probably it wouldn't be right. In general, if you can, you should do your sadhanas separately anyway, even separate from the Lama Chöpa.

## 2. Seeking Realization on the Path to Enlightenment<sup>474</sup>

This is a nice title we have created. In this section, you go through a complete meditation on each of the stages of the path, but in the form of receiving blessings. As you meditate on each of these points, you have Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang and the whole Field of Merit in front of you. In their presence you focus on each point. And see the guru as inseparable of Buddha's and particularly as Buddha Vajradhara. At each stage you think:

I request that I may be able to see this clearly and have no obstacles; may they be cleared.  
I request that this will be realized within me.

Then light and liquid come from the Supreme Field of Merit, and in particular from the Principal. It purifies each and every negativity, especially whatever obstacles there may be for developing realizations of that stage, and I become pure, receiving the blessings of that stage.

That is the general rule for this practice where you meditate on the Lamrim in combination with the *Lama Chöpa*.

### Guru-Devotion as the Root of all Development

*Zhing choh dham pa je tsün la ma la  
chö ching gü pe söl wa tap peyi tü  
dhe lek tsa wa gön po khyö nyi kyi  
gye zhin je su dzin par jin gyi lop.*

- st. 50. **Precious Lama, supreme field of good fortune,  
Root of all goodness and joy, my Protector,  
By the power of my offerings, respect, and prayers,  
Gladly bless me with your care!**

Perhaps this is the best translated verse next to the *nature pure* one.<sup>475</sup> This verse reminds us once again of the Supreme Field of Merit. Further, it reminds us of the eight benefits of having a guru-devotional practice and eight disadvantages of not having it and the eight disadvantages of behaving wrongly towards the mas-

<sup>474</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 200-271; Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 138-174.

<sup>475</sup> Stanza 6.

ter,<sup>476</sup> altogether twenty-four points to remember. Here you review all of them. These are taught clearly in the Lamrim.

The essence of guru-devotional practice is a perfect relationship, a pure, faultless relationship. What kind of faults do you expect? Three points: a) not developing pure trust, b) wrong understanding; c) wrong doubt. Pure relation means being free of those three.

*Zhing choh dham pa – Supreme field of good fortune.* Here I want to explain a little bit about the Supreme Field of Merit. What is the best actual, literal field in the world? A field in the tropics is the best field because you can grow food there all year round, four different consecutive crops every year. A field that gives you a yield all year round is better than one that gives only a single crop. The Supreme Field of Merit gives you good results not only four times a year but 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Even Meyer's is not open 365 days a year - they are closed on Christmas Day!

That is why this is called the best or Supreme Field of Merit. Thurman calls it the supreme field of benefit. In Tibetan that is *zhing choh dham pa*. *Zhing* is field, *choh* is supreme and *dham pa* is sometimes translated as 'holy'. That might not be right. It rather indicates that this field does not depend on putting in seeds but gives results once you have made supplications to it. *Gü pe* means supplication; *söl wa tap pei tui* means remembering those.

*Je tsün Lama – Precious Lama.* Whom do you learn from? From your teacher. So, when referring to a teacher, a guru, we say *jetsün lama dampä*. The word *Je tsün* means 'one who is fit to be object of refuge'. Normally you say guru means 'heavy in quality', but the bottom line is 'fit to be object of refuge'.

What makes one fit to be object of refuge? The *external* quality needed is: well-behaved, well-tamed. The example is the monks, bikshus. It is not the monks' dress that counts, but the individual's way of living that goes with wearing that dress: protecting and honoring the vows. That is the signal given by the dress. My case, me personally, is the number one disqualification here. Now the *internal* quality. Internally the person's mind should be bodhimind oriented: unlimited, unconditioned, ultimate love-compassion. That is the internal quality of a guru. There's a *secret* quality of the guru, too. That is 'one who has a Vajrayana practice'. Thus, when you have those, the external quality, the internal quality and the secret quality you become the kind of person that can guide, you become a guru, I should say.

Here in Jewel Heart we have programs. And for each of the programs we have teachers giving teachings. These teachers are representing the master. And a teacher should first try to gain those qualities. Whether you are a monk or nun or not, try to be a good person, a person that considers the goal, freedom from suffering more important than money, a person who considers total enlightenment more important than comfort, a person who considers other persons more important than self, or if not, at least equally important. Traditional teachings will tell you that others are more important, in practical situations that is quite difficult! At least one shouldn't give in to ego's dictate, but consider others' needs equally important to deal with. See to it that you have compassion and love not as just a buzz word but in actual practice.

And then have a Vajrayana practice. Vajrayana is so important! We are all traveling towards our goal and Vajrayana is an extraordinary vehicle. Compared to a car it is like a supersonic jet. Of course, the more fast it is the more danger there is too, but there is no question on the value of this vehicle compared to an ordinary one. And we are very fortunate, because Vajrayana does not come often at all. It is very rare. Even among Buddha's teachings Vajrayana is very rare. Today as far as I know, only the Tibetan Buddhism carries it, and maybe the Japanese a little bit. So it is rare stuff. There are imitations, but the real Vajrayana is like the original paintings of Van Gogh and Rembrandt, very hard to get and you know its value. Vajrayana not only has art value, it has a purpose, too. That is why it is a must.

So, when you have those three, the outer, inner and secret qualities, and not only having the practice, but also the vows maintained, then this word *je tsün* fits you. The *tsün* means that.<sup>477</sup> It is the sort of definition how to be fit [to be object of refuge].

<sup>476</sup> For listing see Gehlek Rinpoche *Lam Rim Teachings*. For explanation see Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in Our Hands*, vol. II, p. 3-24.

<sup>477</sup> *Je* is the honorific part. Also used on its own as short of *Je tsün*, like in *Je Tsongkhapa*.

*Chö* means making offerings, and that means outer, inner, secret and suchness offerings. We have talked about what that is during the seven limbs, but briefly outer offerings are the actually laid out and mentally created offerings. Inner offerings are the offerings connected with the inner being, secret offerings are secret and suchness offerings is acknowledging the nature of reality.

*Gü pa* is the offering of respect. This is not the normal English understanding of respect. It is the respect grown out of the relationship between guru and disciple, such as mental relationship and actual physical relationship. In the Lamrim there are a lot of outlines talking about that relationship, for example the reasons why you need a master, what kind of master that should be, what qualities he should have, what the benefits of having a master are, what the disadvantages are of wrongly maintaining that relationship, and the disadvantages of not having a master. All this falls under the one word of having respect.

*Profound faith.* The actual practice of guru yoga lies in the relationship, mental and physical.<sup>478</sup> All the guru-yoga outlines boil down to these two and out of these the mental relationship is most important. This again boils down to having a profound faith to the master who is the root of all development. The bottom line, bare bones, deep down, that is where you are getting it. That is what all these many outlines boil down to. You can read the chapter on guru devotion in the *Liberation in the Palm of your Hand* or now there is even a translation of Tsongkhapa's *Lamrim Chenmo* available in English.<sup>479</sup> As a translation this one is not that great, because it is done through the co-operation of many well-known translators. Every one of them has their own little thing, their own little antenna going. Anyway, in that text there must be thirty or forty pages on this subject and they all boil down to that one single point: *tsa wa de pa cha wa* which means: *the root of all development is having a profound faith*.

It is important to realize that this is talking about profound faith, not stupid faith. Stupid faith will produce a Jim Jones situation. This does not happen with profound faith. All the great lineage masters did have profound faith to their masters. Now you can look at people in the west. Look at Allen Ginsberg and Ram Dass. Their faith is not a stupid faith but profound faith. Ram Dass, who recently had a stroke, was saying, 'My stroke is through the guru's grace.' You can see how much that faith is the root of development. Allen Ginsberg too proved who he was just by the way he remained in meditation at his death. One person asked me, 'Do you think there is any westerner that has any significant spiritual development? When you look around you always see that they all have some problems.' My answer is that Allen was one. I am not going to name others.

Stupid faith makes you stupid, profound faith makes you profound. I am not going to talk much about the guru devotion, you can read about it in the Lamrim. But I would like to give a quick overview of the qualities a disciple should have.

*Qualities of the disciple* The disciple or practitioner has to be *open-minded, free of prejudices*, and should be *free of likes and dislikes*. There may be some practices that you don't like but you have to do them too. You have to achieve something. You might like some practices very much, but you should put a limit, because there are lots of things you have to do. This practice is not just one single, little thing. Here we have both paths, sutra and tantra. It is huge! The sixty-four steps of the *Odyssey to Freedom* are extremely abbreviated steps. One should be *free of pre-fabricated ideas*. Further one should have *great enthusiasm*. Such a person is fit to be a disciple or practitioner. You have to ask, 'Do I have those qualities with me?' Everyone of us is open-minded, no doubt about it. Are you *intelligent*? Certainly, most of you. Sorry, all of you. You can analyze, you can understand and you have no emotional investments, truly looking and digging in, capable of finding out and holding and extracting the benefits. A few may have some handicaps, but even then they are suitable for shorter, concise ways of doing it, suitable for the time limits they have and the kind of mind they have. Desire and *interest for the practice* must be there. You all have that, otherwise there would be no reason why you have to spend ten days in a tough retreat in the middle of nowhere in Fenton, Michigan, in the middle of snow. Some people come traveling thousands of miles away, many people drive in and even if they can't stay, they come and go and come back as much as they can. That shows a great deal of interest. Even if you are sick, you still try to

<sup>478</sup> Also see p. 8f.

<sup>479</sup> Tsongkhapa, *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*. vol. I, p. 69-92.

sit here, mouth and nose covered. Even if you have a headache, you just don't want to lie down, but come here and try to participate.

However, the problem with our interest is the priority. Of course, our bills are the top priority, otherwise the bill collectors will chase you. Not everyone gets away from the bill collectors the way I did. I told them I would break their legs. Don't you know the story?

*Story of the Bill collectors.* When I was living in Cherry Street, I was chased by bill collectors like hell. I woke up one night with my heart beating very fast. I thought I had a stroke. I got up very slowly, tried to move all my limbs. It worked and finally I went to the toilet and threw up. The next day, all my friends urged me to go and see a doctor. Actually, nothing was going on any more, everything was over. However, I went to see a doctor in one of these emergency clinics. In there they did not even let me put my trousers back on after examination, but put me on a stretcher and into an ambulance and off to St. Johns Hospital. There I was waiting for a long time and nothing happened. Finally I ended up in the emergency unit where they watched me for five days. At the end of that they told me to go. I asked, 'So what do I do?' They said, 'Do whatever you are doing.'

Anyway, a huge bill came thereafter. Although I did have insurance, the insurance company would not pay for it. It went back and forth a number of times and then the bill collectors started calling. One of them actually called me and said, 'I am near Cherry Street and I am coming over. I am going to look at your belongings and I am going to collect some of them.' I was told that was totally illegal. But he thought he could bully me. I said, 'Fine, come. If you don't come, you don't have balls and if you walk back out on your two legs, I don't have balls.' He said, 'What do you mean?' I said, 'You come in on your two legs and you will go out on a stretcher.' He said, 'You mean to say that you are going to break my legs?' I said, 'Yes, definitely, with that big cricket bat I keep always at my bed side.' He said, 'I take it, you are not American?' I said, 'No, I am not.' That was true, I was not an American at that time. He said, 'I take it you don't even have a car and the house doesn't belong to you.' I said, 'No'. Then he said, 'Jesus, one of those types of people.' And banged the phone down. He never showed up. Two months later, the insurance wrote, 'Under reconsiderations, we will pay the bill.'

*Daily life practice.* But you can't get away like that all the time. So it is our priority to pay our bills. At the same time we have time for all sorts of other priorities along with it. The Dharma on the other hand, is a long goal, we have a great deal of interest, it is very important and we always think it can wait until tomorrow. That is the assessment of our priorities. The Dharma is very important, but it can wait until tomorrow. We may have to reconsider our priorities. If we really do it tomorrow it is fine, but if tomorrow never comes, that is a problem. You know, every day is today, there is always another tomorrow.

You should not think about it in terms of huge, overwhelming commitments, but think in terms of adopting it as part of your life. It is sort of has to become knitted into your daily chores, your daily life. You can put the cleaning of your room into the cleansing part of the preliminary practices. Tidying up and decorating your place becomes part of your offering practice. Motivation should be knitted into your mind, as soon as you wake up in the morning, wondering what to do today. The prevention of negative actions should be knitted into the awareness you have in your daily life, whatever you are doing. The only thing left to do in formal practice is the saying of some sadhanas and mantras which you can do occasionally over here and over there, when you are taking a shower, sitting on the throne – provided you are facing the right direction. You can maintain your awareness at the time of walking and during your exercises. You have to exercise. Everybody tells me that I should exercise, but I never do it. Your sleeping time can be practiced as yoga of sleeping. When you wake up, make that the yoga of rising. The yoga of music is when your phone rings. Make it into offering of music. Why not? It is so simple to make your every day life into practice. Every single boss that is yelling at you is a wonderful object of compassion and patience.

Atisha always had a most irritating person with him who used to insult him all the time. The great Tibetan teachers had a meeting and said to Atisha, 'We decided to send him back. Whatever amount of money is needed, we will provide it, even if we don't have it, but we will find it.' Atisha, however, said, 'He is my best object of patience. Please don't send him back!'

There you go. The person who irritates you, whether it is your companion, your boss or an irritating person working for you, a person talking to you on the other end of the phone, the person who had too many beans at his last meal sitting next to you on a chair, the driver who keeps passing you on the free-

way right and left, all of them are good objects of patience and compassion. They are really good objects for your practice, including the irritating mother, father, mother in law, son in law, and so on. You have plenty of them there. Use them in the best way. That way you don't have to spend extra time sitting on your cushion, generating some guy who irritates you, then trying to reduce your anger and meditate patience!

And you have to do your laundry in the United States, whether you like it or not, unless you are very wealthy and can afford to throw your clothes away every day. The laundry washing is one of the best time to do your purification, really. The dirty laundry water in the machine is not just simple dirt, but the dirt of the delusions and the ignorance. Remember *dü ma dri ma pa*.<sup>480</sup> Ignorance, hatred, jealousy, etc, you can wash all of them easily in the washing machine. Don't miss the opportunity. When you are cleaning your clothes, when you are ironing them, you are beautifying the clothes which will be worn on the body of the yidam, like Yamantaka, Vajrayogini and White Tara, etc. You have got to do your laundry anyway, so why not make the best use of it? You have to take a bath or shower. So wash away all ignorance and delusions. The shower head is not just a shower head but it is the Lama Vajrasattva, pouring nectar over you, washing outer, inner and secret obstacles away. You can say NAME CHENDRA MENDRA TRO TAYA HULU HULU TIRA TIRA NADA MANDA HANA HANA AMRITA HUM PHAT. Why not? It is very easy. Even if you are wearing boots, think that these boots are leading you to the perfect enlightenment. Even the shoe laces, if you have them, they are the six paramitas. You can use all these things in your daily life. I am not even going to touch the underwear!

*Gladly bless me with your care.* The two last lines of this verse are about receiving the blessings. The Supreme Field is the root of all good things happening, so you request to be accepted in a pleasing way, rather than an irritated way.

You seek blessings from the Lama to accept you because of the offerings and supplications you have made. *Dhe lek* has special meaning. *Dhe* here stands for temporary, short-term joy and *lek* means permanent, long-term joy. *Tsa wa* is root; *gön po* is protector; *khyö* means you, *khyö nyi kyi* is by yourself; *gye zhin* means joyfully, gladly, happily, with pleasure. So you ask the Guru to gladly accept you.

If you have time, you can visualise here and do the Migtsema. Between each verse you can put the Migtsema and do that. That way you will be able to meditate all stages of the Lamrim in the form of obtaining blessings. That is very suitable for us and is very good.

You may even like to do your Migtsema retreat with the Lama Chöpa this time<sup>481</sup>. Verse by verse and the 10,000 divided by the number of the verses here. [That way] you meditate the Lamrim stages and you say one verse at the time [joined with] the number of Migtsemas that you need to say to make it 10,000. You can try that. We can talk about it. That way you not only have the *Ganden Lha Gyema* but you have the *Lama Chöpa* combined, you have the whole Lamrim overview for practicing while saying the Migtsema and taking it in the blessing form. All that makes it to be very good, very useful.

### *Meditation: Receiving Inspiration on Guru Devotional practice*

[I recall that] the practice of guru devotion is the root of all development. I recall the steps of taking a Lama and acknowledging that he is the source of all joy. I remember the benefits of having a Guru, the disadvantages of not having one, and how to treat him properly.

For that I need intelligent faith, born from intellectual understanding as well as analytical and concentrated meditation combined together. By that may I gain a perfect devotion and a perfect relationship.

How wonderful it would be if I and all mother sentient beings could develop the perfect solid foundation of guru-devotion practice within us. I request Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang to send blessings to develop this.

Light and liquid comes from the body of the Supreme Field of Merit, purifying all my negativities in general and particularly the obstacles of lacking faith, of misunderstanding, and of doubt

<sup>480</sup> "Clear the dust, clear the dirt". Refers to the story of *Lam Chun*, who gained realizations by cleaning. The story is told in Gehlek Rimpoche *Lam Rim Teachings*, vol. I.

<sup>481</sup> Rimpoche refers to the upcoming yearly Migtsema group retreat in Nijmegen.



and the obstacle of seeing the guru as separate from Buddha. All obstacles are completely washed away from my system in the form of dirty laundry water. I become pure. And I obtain the blessing to develop a perfect guru-devotional practice.

I realize that in the Hinayana I have to see the guru as being like the Buddha, on the sutra Mahayana level I have to see the guru as a Buddha and in Vajrayana the guru is inseparable from Buddha.

I want to develop the realizations of seeing the Guru as a fully enlightened being, acknowledging him as the source of all development, and finally recognizing the absolute Lama who is one with my mind. I rejoice in it.

I hope to get the development of longevity, fortune, luck and qualities in general and in particular seeing the guru as Buddha.

I pray that the guru may protect me, help me, guide me, lead me to the total enlightenment.

Think that this is actually happening and working.

### *Questions and Answers*

Audience: Who is my Guru? Is it Tsongkhapa, is it you or is it our group leader?

Rinpoche: I think it's your choice. But also, this needs a little bit of clarification. Yes, we are having a teachers training and we have those that are already teaching and we are sort of refer to them as teachers right now. However, the actual idea I have in mind, is 'facilitator'; they are facilitating the Dharma.. So, right now we will use the idea of facilitator, rather than guru. The Dharma is quite precious and we have to be very careful for the future generations. That's why we are taking that precaution. Not because these individuals are not qualified to be a guru, for the benefit of future generations.

Audience: It is said that Tsongkhapa didn't obtain full enlightenment in his lifetime because he was giving an example of keeping the monastic vows pure and so he waited until the bardo to obtain full enlightenment. I am curious how to understand that in relationship to Guru devotion, because we're building a relationship where we see our Guru as fully enlightened and there is that link all the way to Je Tsongkhapa. If he is at the head of that lineage, and he didn't obtain full enlightenment than how do we view all those lama's as fully enlightened?

Rinpoche: Good question. I will give you a simple, straight answer. I think it really doesn't matter whether that individual is a enlightened or not when you see this individual, like we said, as a representative of the enlightened beings. Whether they are enlightened or not enlightened, is not for us to judge. As we want the benefit of dealing with the enlightened beings, we will treat the individual as a representative and one of the enlightened beings. With that, we get the total benefit of dealing with the true living Buddha. This statement, I think, is made from the benefit point of view rather than an actual statement about the individual, whosoever it might be.

I have a number of Guru's and what I do in my own practise is this: whether they are individually fully enlightened or not is not an issue for me. I put them in the lineage or at the place of the direct gurus, in the place of the Buddha or even above Buddha, even above the yidam. And I try to maintain my relationship as pure as I can. That is my genuine concern. Whether actually right or wrong is not an issue. The issue is what benefit I get. (It looks like a stiff and stupid statement.)

Audience: When there is doubt, I am the one who has these doubts. But something like that happens. How can you purify these doubts? And, when something happens that causes you to doubt, how to keep the relation pure?

Rinpoche: If the Guru is alive, go and see him and apologise and tell this is what happened and make a request. That's the best and easiest way of doing. If it is not a living guru then you simply say the Guru mantra' and visualize light and liquid coming and purifying all negativities in general and particularly this one.

Audience: In the text a lot of verses are repeated three times. What is the reason?

Rinpoche: Much more impact on our consciousness. I don't think there is any other reason.

Audience: How many times? Three, four, five?

Rinpoche: Three or seven times. Three is to make more impact and maybe corresponding with Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Seven also to make more impact but also it corresponds with something called “the seven kisses”<sup>482</sup>, it is supposed to be a quality of Buddha Vajradhara.

That covers the root of all development, guru-devotional practice.

### How to Train the Mind

After having a proper guru-devotional practice, how do you train your mind? There is a reason why they introduce this after having a perfect relationship. But, if we have to wait to develop that within our mind, free of doubts, free of misunderstandings it can be life-long effort! That’s why it is permitted to have guru devotion and the next points go together, side by side.

This point has basically two outline divisions: the sutra path and the tantra path. The sutra method has three parts: that in common with the lower level, that in common with the medium level, and Mahayana practice. In common with the lower level has two parts: generating interest in future life and the method of how to obtain a smooth, good future life. This is as usual; you all know Lamrim quite well, so it’s not Greek to you.

### Generating Interest in Future Lives

*Len chik tsam zhik nye pei del jor dhi.  
nye ka nyur du jik pei tsül tok nay  
dhon mey tse di ja way mi yeeng war  
dhon dhen nying po len par jin gyi lop*

- st. 51. **Knowing that life’s liberties and opportunities  
Are found but once and quickly lost,  
Inspire me to grasp life’s essential meaning  
And not be distracted by pointless activities.**

This verse covers the recognition of life, its qualities, the rareness and the need to embrace it. It tells you about the pleasures and opportunities, how to recognize this life, its importance, the difficulty to find it. I don’t have to go into detail, because you know very well that this life is an extraordinary life. You have the background of the Odyssey to Freedom and the Lamrim. Somehow you have to work out a little system for yourself, remembering the major outlines.

*Emphasis on the future.* In principle, Buddhism does not give so much priority to how to make my life comfortable and nice and beautiful and wonderful. The emphasis is made on the future. Future does not exclude future within this life. But there’s more emphasis on future lives than what’s going to happen tomorrow. What does that mean to you? Think on that very carefully and it will give you an idea. The emphasis is totally on the future, on long-range future benefits than on short-range benefits. I want you to be aware of that. Because a lot of people think of Buddhism as a means to make me feel good, have fun and make money or make me feel comfortable in this life. You can use it for that. But the major emphasis is on a long-term goal. Why? The long term is considered more important, because the period is much longer.

*Attachment to this life.* Of course, there is no doubt that we have to embrace our life, but we all have a very strong attachment to our life. Sometimes you have so much attachment that you are totally absorbed in and overly focused on this life. Anything you want, you have to get *now*, anything that has to happen has to be now, now, now. Basically, we have that attitude, and so we have to tell ourselves and our kids, “There’s always a tomorrow.” When I was a kid, they always told me that. As children, we wanted everything today, now. Similarly, we now behave like children; everything, whatever it is, we want now, in this life. “I can wait till tomorrow, I can wait a week, I’m willing to wait a year but I want it.” That’s bas-

<sup>482</sup> Seven qualities of enlightenment. See Glossary.

ically our attitude. So we are overly focused on this life and we have a total ‘couldn’t care less’ attitude towards the future lives. Maybe we don’t even believe or accept that there is a future life, and if somehow you give it the benefit of the doubt, then it is at a very low key, lukewarm, like “It might be there, it might not be, I don’t know.” This is one of our biggest problems. That’s why instead of emphasizing the need to embrace life (though they talk about that) this point was put under the heading of ‘generating interest in future lives’. This is a very important point. Everything should be geared towards establishing a good future life.

*Life’s liberties and opportunities.* We should think more about the quality of this human life. *Del jor dhi* introduces you the qualities of leisures, *del*, and richness or fortune. Leisure and richness in this life, if you think carefully and remember, is not only about life itself and how great it is, but more than that it is about taking advantage of the opportunity available. That is what completes the value of this life. If you have a fortunate life of opportunity and you do not take advantage of it, you are disqualified, you do not really have a rich and fortunate life. One shouldn’t think, “Well, I don’t have much time to practice, my job is not right, my responsibilities are not right ...” When you have the karmic conditions, it is always right, no matter how much you blame things. First, you blame your job, because, “I’m too busy, there’s no time for me.” That is half blaming, half maybe true. But a person can definitely make time, no matter how busy you may be, nobody is busy for 24 hours a day. We need seven or eight (a few maybe six) hours sleep, but we do have some time. If you organize your time properly, there is always enough time to do your Dharma practice.

No matter how much you scream and yell, “I have no time,” it’s definitely not true. You have time to drive for an hour, you have time to spend two, three hours gossiping, eating and doing chores, reading newspapers, listening to the radio. If we go and see a movie, how long do we sit there? If we sit and watch television, how long? If we sit and read some interesting book, how long? We find time for those things. So, it is not that we don’t have the time, but somehow we are not properly organized, and like to blame something else. Don’t blame your profession. Blame yourself, how you have managed or not managed your time. The point here is, whatever possibility you have, make the best use of it. Make the best use of your time, conditions, and opportunities, all of them. Well-organized usage of time is needed, because this is the twentieth century.

All this qualifies us to be in this category of those possessing liberties and opportunities or leisures and fortune. That is introduction of the quality of human life. *Len chik tsam zhik*: by sheer chance we happened to find it once. You don’t get it all the time; it is by sheer chance that it happened this time. That indirectly indicates you it is very important.

*Are found but once.* *Nye* is found and *ka* is difficulty. There are two points here: the causal point of view and the result point of view.

What causes such a life? What is the direct cause? What are the conditions of such a life? According to Buddha the causes of such a life, the fundamental principle to have such a life is perfect morality. How good our morality is, is best known to ourselves. I am not saying we are all immoral, but a perfect morality is a little difficult for us. We are breaking our vows and commitments all the time, mostly because of our negative emotions. Any family commitment broken (marriage vow or something) is caused by negative emotions. If you listen to anyone that has a family problem, the excuses are mostly “he or she doesn’t care”. Family is not necessarily man and women; two people getting together and living together is a family, whether it is man and woman, man and man or woman and woman together. So if you have a marriage vow and you are breaking that, it becomes an immorality, whether you like it or not. And if you break your refuge vow, your bodhisattva vow or your Vajrayana vow, these are points of immorality. By knowing ourselves, is it easy, finding the cause for taking rebirth as a human being? That is how we see it is difficult to find.

From the result point of view it happens to be the right time and the right place. It is the right time, because if you would have lived 2,500 years earlier, you wouldn’t have the Buddha’s experience. Forget about 2,500 years, even in the forties you didn’t have the opportunity; we were very busy with war. And in the fifties you didn’t have the opportunity; we were busy with rebuilding and had a quite conservative closed mind. The openness has actually taken place in the sixties. The sixties culture has opened up people. Had it not been there, would we have that much interest in the spiritual path? I am not necessari-

ly in favor of a contra-culture however the openness and the awareness brought by that culture we should really appreciate and now in the year 2000, in this millennium, we should take a total advantage of it. That's what I mean the right time and the right place. The right place – here in the Netherlands – because of peoples mind, because of the lesser gap between rich and poor, the attitude of the people and the social security system. Last night we visited a handicapped people's home, and the facilities there are really fantastic. Nobody is bullying anybody. Everybody has his own facilities provided and individual handicapped people have sort themselves are in charge, not some caretaker. All of that gives you a great opportunity.

*Meditation on the difficulty of obtaining a Precious Human Life*

I recognize the preciousness of my life, and its difficult to find. When thinking about how difficult it is to find this life, there are the difficulties by nature, by causes and by examples.

The example is that of a blind turtle living on the bottom of a huge ocean who pops up once in every five hundred years to come to the surface. Somewhere on that ocean floats a golden yoke. How great are the chances that this turtle will be able to stick its neck through that golden yoke? (These are extreme examples.)

The difficulty to find this life from the point of view of the causes shows that I need perfect morality, as well as the help of the six paramitas. Knowing my own morality, I know how doubtful it is whether I will get such a life again.

The difficulty to find such a life in terms of nature is that I have to live in a time when a Buddha teaches and in a place where the teachings are available. Forget about other galaxies. Just look in this little world of ours. That tells you how rare and how difficult to find it is. Look at the downtown of the big cities. Where are all the people in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles? Can you find the Dharma in Wall Street? No. In the Water Towers? Or in Orchard Road in Singapore? No. So wherever the majority of the people are, you are not going to find Buddha's teaching at all. You know that. It is available in places like Flint, Michigan!

Then look at it from your personal point of view. Look at your friends, the people you deal with, your circle and see how many people have that access or even want to have it.

Even your better half that you wanted to drag here, won't come! Naturally, from that person's point of view it is something that they don't believe in. It is useless. What can you do with that? And that is a harmless point of view. If it gets bad, people will say, 'Oh, this is a cult, it is terrible, you shouldn't go there!' All this shows you how rare the Dharma is.

Light and liquid comes from the Supreme Field of Merit in general and in particular from the body of the Lama. It purifies all negativities in general and in particular obstacles to recognizing and understanding the qualities of this life and makes you move.

*Get moving.* This is the point. Even if you get the message, but if it doesn't make you move, there is no point. You have got to move and not waste your time. Don't submit to your natural, daily, lazy chores that you have adopted in your usual habit. You don't want to be stuck. It is so easy to get stuck, whether it is for your own reasons or because of others. I notice that myself. When I want to get up in the morning, I get stuck. I have to do so many things. When you are out and you want to eat you can get stuck. Either the food is not there, or not done yet or whatever. These are only small examples of being stuck. But the big ones are that we cannot let go of our bad habits. We cannot stop smoking cigarettes. We cannot stop smoking dope. There are so many things that have become part of our daily habits, as well as our other addictions. We can't let go of anger, of competitiveness, and all that. We cannot even let go of our dirty old socks and shoes. There are these things which we have to collect. We think there will be a time where we might want to use them. We will even admire people who keep all these dirty, old things. We regard that as a quality, rather than a disadvantage. But when you have to move house you will know how many things you have to throw out. Addiction is not necessarily about something that is very good or fancy or kinky. Somehow you can get addictions from nothing.

Thinking about these points should make you move as well as give you inspiration to do practice. If that does not work at this point you will have problems with the whole rest of the Lamrim.

*And quickly lost.* *Nyur du* means quickly going. That introduces impermanence, in particular, gross impermanence. Gross impermanence here is talking about us, not about whether the tree is going to fall down or not, nor whether the house is going to decay or not. We are talking about our impermanence, whether we're going to be in this body or not. Right now we are young, beautiful, handsome, attractive. However, that's not permanent, it is definitely not permanent. Take my own case. I am close to sixty. Looking at sixty reminds you of Gungtang Jampelyang's biography. When Gungtang Jampelyang was asked to give his personal life story, he immediately said, "Oh yes, yes, easy to give to you." He said,

At the beginning of my life I kept on thinking "I am a kid, a kid, a kid,"  
and twenty years were gone.

After that I thought, "I will do something, I will do something, I will make some difference,"  
and forty years were gone.

Then I thought, "Oh I am too old, too old" – twenty more years gone.

So, I couldn't do it, I couldn't do it. Sorry, I couldn't do it.

That's exactly how life passes without our realizing it. Young and beautiful today, but that is definitely not permanent; it is impermanent. Every second clicks and every click is a click towards decay. I am sorry. There are tremendous numbers of signs and signals. We were not born with glasses; that is a signal. Wearing a hearing aid is another signal; you were not born with it.

### *Thoughts on impermanence*

Meditating, reminding ourselves of impermanence, dying, and decaying is very important. The purpose is not to make ourselves feel terrible. You can keep on thinking, 'beautiful, wonderful, youthful' as long as you live but at the same time the process of dying and decaying is also going on, no doubt about it. If not, there would be no reason to put color in your hair, glasses on your eyes, a miracle hearing aid in your ear, or Oil of Olay on your body. Those are actually signs for yourself that the body is decaying. It's very good to recognize that, for two reasons: in one way, if you recognize it's decaying, you can put on all this makeup and look better; in another way, this is reality. You must keep on acknowledging this. That does not mean you have to submit yourself to the symptoms, but recognize them.

There are three roots, nine reasonings, three resolutions, remember?<sup>483</sup> Impermanence will give you an interest in future life.

*Death is definite.* We will not stay here permanently. We have to go. Like it or not, we have to go. Of all the great ones, not one is living; we have only their names left. All these masters and teachers of the Tibetan tradition, Tsongkhapa, Drukpa Kunleg, Gyelwa Drikungpa, all of them are gone, only the names remain. Of course they have left some books behind, but that's all.

All of us are definitely going to die one day, for sure. We have to go through that, no question. Nobody in here is permanent. No matter how young you may be, no matter how beautiful you may be, no matter how healthy you may be, we all have to go. We may casually say "Oh, yeah, we all got to go, true," but when you actually see the things happening to the right and left of you it is different. No matter what hopes we may have or where we may hide, we have to go.

The question now rises: are we ready? You can answer yourself. We're not. So, get ready! That is the main point. It is absolutely true. There is not going to be an announcement that we are going to die. There is a description of the Northern Continent which is one of the continents surrounding Mt. Meru in the mandala universe. In the Northern Continent there is supposed to be an announcement from the sky, 'You, So and So, the time is coming for you to go within a certain time.' You also know that your life span is thousand years. So you know when you are getting close. But for us it is not like that. When you have to go, you have to go, even while you are drinking a glass of water. You have to go in the middle of smoking a cigarette. You have to go while you are walking, before the other leg is touching the ground. That is our reality. We are all dressed up nicely, with make-up on and combed hair. Bald guys probably put moisturizer and Vaseline on. Then we put perfume on. We make ourselves look artificially solid and stable. Especially, we all do a lot of exercise. However, the life is extremely fragile. When the time comes to go, life just goes, really. It does not take long, a couple of minutes. We are there, on that point. We can never know when we will go. You can't be sure that when you get up that you are going back to

<sup>483</sup> Gehlek Rimpoche, *Lam Rim Teachings*.

sleep tonight. When you go to sleep you are never sure if you are going to get up tomorrow. That is the true situation. There is no doubt about it. We make our plans for tomorrow, for the future. We will say, 'I am going to fly tomorrow, I am going to stay tomorrow', but you can never know. Each of us should ask themselves that question. We are literally living day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute. That is the continuity of discontinuity. No matter how much we pretend to be solid, that is our life.

In short, not a single being in here or outside of here, lives forever. We and everybody else sooner or later dies. Death will definitely come, whatever you do. It cannot be stopped. If you are searching for a place where death will not get you, you will never find it, not in the air, not under the ground. Hell, heaven and earth, wherever you look, you are not going to find it. You may go to Tibet and hide behind the mountains, but death is going to get you there.

Buddha has given the example for that. The Sakya caste was one day attacked by another group of people. Buddha's disciples tried to hide three kids, one in Buddha's begging bowl, one with Indra or Brahma in one of the god realms and another one somewhere else. By the evening, they were all dead.

We may blame the food, other people, cigarettes, alcohol, disease, drugs, *etc.* In reality you have to go anyway. If one thing is not going to get you, something else is. We talk about the great spiritual masters like Buddha, Jesus and everybody else, as if they had just gone to the bathroom to change and will come back out any minute. Such a myth has been reinforced by the Tibetan system of reincarnate lamas. It gives us extra hope to live forever.

You know, people accept reincarnation quite easily. I have been wondering about that. Now I know, you just don't want to go. That is the only reason. How are you going to know that this little kid is the incarnation of that old, bad guy? There is no way. It is simply that we like the idea, because we like to live forever.

When somebody has died we often say, 'He is there in spirit'. All that contributes to maintaining our desire to be there forever. This is a false hope, absolutely not true. It is creating trouble and is making us waste our time. Buddha said,

The best imprint is that of the elephant, because it is heavy. It makes a big dent.  
Out of all types of awareness, the awareness of impermanence is best,  
Because it will make a difference to our feelings.

We are dealing with obstacles as if there was a third, external person somewhere, trying to hold us back or block us. In reality, the thing we are fighting with is our addictions. Sometimes, reincarnation, instead of helping, reinforces our addiction of not wanting to go, not wanting to separate, die, lose. It suggests to us that we can hang on. Actually, that is a big obstacle to our practice, particularly people like us who are supposed to be committed to spiritual development. We very definitely don't like to be reborn in lower realms. We definitely want our spiritual development. Yet we are unable to put our whole energy into it. This is just because of the feeling that we could live permanently, forever.

*The time of death is uncertain.* Our spiritual practice may be a priority for us, but for tomorrow, not now. It is because we don't pay attention to impermanence, particularly death and especially the uncertainty of the time of death. We just don't comprehend it. We know about it, we heard about it, we have thought about it, but it is not really present with us. It is all true, yes, but not that urgent. That is our real problem. We talk about death and what happens then. But our projection of that is as if that is not going to happen until 365 years later. That is almost what we are thinking. It is a big problem for both, our spiritual and our material needs. The sense of urgency is not there for us. We know it has to be done, we know it is coming, but not right now – maybe three hundred years later.

We think that So and So is going to die, and this person and that person, but at the same we think, 'I am going to live forever'. People ask me, 'After you die, what shall we do?' But do we ever think, 'I may go before'? This is not in our vocabulary. We never think we could go before the others. We think, 'You go first, I come later.' But there is nothing to add up in our life. The years go and don't come back. We experience that. They are just gone. We have been in this place in summer. Now it is winter. We feel as if nothing has changed. But six months are gone.

One good quality the westerners have is that they will do things even if there is not much time. If you have five minutes to do a job, you will do it. If there is two minutes available, you will do something for two minutes. You have that great training. Not me. I need a chunk of time, otherwise I won't do it. I am looking for a big slot of time, but that is never there. You are different. It must be your culture, or maybe that is how you had to function already in school. That is an advantage. Use that advantage for your

spiritual practice too, in your daily life, otherwise seconds will eat up the minutes, minutes the hours, hours will take the days, days will take months, those will take the years and your life is gone. It is the beginning of January now. Very soon, in no time at all, it is going to be Christmas and the New Year of 2002. And every time the clock ticks, the sand is going down in the Days of our Lives.

I used to watch that show 'Days of our Lives'. They have that hour glass and the sand drops through, even though there is a bottle neck. There is nothing we can add to our life. There are tremendous amounts of causes of death, but very few for living. Even the little causes of living, like eating food which is supposed to sustain the body, can make you sick too. This shows how few facilities are available to sustain life and how many there are to cause death. There are endless diseases. As soon as we find a cure for one, others will pop up out of nowhere. The scientists will say that this or that new disease comes from monkeys or from the air, or it is the fault of the CIA or it comes from another planet, but wherever they are coming from, they will be there. It is never going to be disease-free, never ever. Otherwise it would not be samsara. For example, yellow fever does not kill us any more, but something else is there, let's say tuberculosis. If that doesn't kill us any more, there are all these forms of cancer. Probably one day they will find a cure for cancer. Then something else comes up, like AIDS. Once that is going to be okay, something else is going to pop up for sure, no doubt. This is because it is samsara. If there was no sickness, it would not be samsara. Truly, that is our life. There are so many causes of dying and not so many for living. We are vulnerable to all these diseases and don't have a cure for all of them.

To accept that we must die is not so hard, but to accept that we can die now is a big problem. Even the person on the death bed on the 11<sup>th</sup> hour may or may not know that they are going to die, but they will never think that it could be in the next hour. Am I aware that I am subject to dying in the next hour? Maybe not. There is a Tibetan saying,

The old monk teaching Dharma to the others doesn't know that the negativities are catching up with him.

We are all in the same boat. You may be young, you may be old, you may be beautiful or ugly. We are all going to go. We could go right now. By some sheer luck, by some chance, the continuation is still going on. If you look at the events in our life, it is project after project going on. It is like chunks and pieces put together. When you take ice cubes out of the fridge and put them together, they join and melt together. We are just like that. That is our reality. Remember that in the morning. It will help you during the day. Remember it at noon time, it will help you for the afternoon. Remember that in the evening. It will help you for the night. You have to remember that. That does not mean that you should set up your mind so that you will go. You should definitely have a mind of living, but you have to be aware of the uncertainty.

*Then, at the time of death, what can help you?* We know very well what we can take: nothing, virtually nothing. We have to leave everything behind. It is so urgent that you have to work, but you will definitely leave your job behind. As a matter of fact, death is the final thing to cut us off. Otherwise we would never leave our job. Right now, wherever we are, we are in contact with the job. We have to make calls, we have to think about it, stay in contact, move and push and so on. At death time you can't. It will just be cut instantly. You know the old English system, when they cut off people's heads? Just like that, you will be cut off from your job.

You will leave your insurance, your doctors, your lama, your companions, your belongings. Nobody carries a suitcase, when they die, do they? No. We may bury a suitcase with the body, like some Chinese who put all sorts of belongings into the grave. So we may bury the suitcase, but nobody will carry it. Not only that, even our own body is useless to us. It no longer has any flexibility. Read Pabongka's *Heart Spoon*. It tells you verse by verse what the experience is like. It says,

The last time your body lies down it is just like the stump of a tree. You cannot move around at all, except perhaps grab hold of your friend's hand or clothes and hang on to that. Your throat will make big, frightening noises every time the air moves in and out. Finally, not even the air will move and we call that the end of the life.

I don't intend to go into that for very long, but it is a very important point for us. In this verse of the Lama Chöpa it is contained in just two words: *quickly lost*. You have to think three points here: Death is definite, the time of death is uncertain and at the time of death, what can help. The third point is not explicitly mentioned in the verse, but it is very helpful and recommended to plug into as well.

You can quickly go through what can help you at the time of death. The accumulation of wealth, the bank balance, the business, investments, insurance policies, *etc.*? All that is not going to help. So you leave them, keep on looking. What about the car, the farm, the house, the plane? All gone. Then only the body is left. That is also going to let you down. You came together into this life, you were born together with it. You took care of it since then. Everybody tells you, 'Look after yourself!', so you do. You feed it. If it is sick you give it medicine. If it is wounded you patch it up. If it starts looking ugly you pull your skin this way and that way, you get a face lift and when you are too fat, you get liposuction. But it is going to let you down. You are going to have to leave it, because it is no longer serviceable. Even that body that we were born with, that we have lived with for 24 hours every day of our life, is going to be separated from us. So what else is left that could help you? Nothing, except your positive and your negative karma. The negative and positive karma is your horse, your car, it is your boat. It is your plane. It is your ride, your money, your travelers check, your budget, the resource at your disposal. But it can dispose of you too! So that is all that is left. Nothing else, no Bush, no Gore, nothing.

Before you start being mean to somebody, think about that. Before you want to blame somebody, think about that. If you want to blame yourself, think about that too. Think, 'I may be able to remember that. This understanding may remain with me forever.'

*Inspire me to grasp life's essential meaning And not be distracted by pointless activities.* Certain pointless activities, of course, we have to indulge in. There is no way we can live without them. But make them into Dharma practice. That will be very helpful.

*Dho mey tse di ja way* is useless activities of this life. Don't let useless work waste your lifetime. We spend a lot of time on useless activities dealing with our life and fill up all our time with that. What is useless work? What is useful? You have to live, to pay your bills, you have to make a living; that is not useless work. I need to remind a number of people of that, because they think that all the work you do for your living is totally useless work. No. It is useful work. It is useful for you, useful for others. What is really useless work? Unnecessary gossiping, unnecessary busy-ness. Necessary things are useful work, but the unnecessary things we spend a lot of time on are useless. You have to make a judgment individually, by yourself, for yourself. No one else can do it. When you can do that, then your life will become worthwhile in terms of material activities.

What do you do spiritually? What is the time requirement for spiritual practice? Very little, if you really look into it. It doesn't take that long. If you really devote your time properly, nicely, with total focus, out of 24 hours you need maybe an hour or maximum an hour and a half. With that you can get done very well. If you even can't do that, you just simply read your commitments, keep your vows intact, just read the shortest possible sadhanas and do the shortest possible *Six-Session Yoga*. Don't go as short as the four-lined verse;<sup>484</sup> that may be too short. But even that will help you not break the commitments, though it is the absolute minimum. If you keep your vows intact just by reading (remember that Vajrayana quality!) it will take twenty minutes maximum to do a Yamantaka or Vajrayogini practice, and to read a *Six-Session Yoga*. We take that long even for a cup of coffee. Really, true. We complain we don't have time, but it is only the time we take for a cup of coffee.

If you do that, even if it is only twenty minutes, then life becomes worthwhile. There are lots of people doing retreats: great, very lucky, wonderful. But the most important thing is daily practice. That really builds up, that really makes you different.

### *Receiving Inspiration*

I contemplate the gross impermanence, death, based on the three roots, three reasonings and three resolutions. Thus I will not waste my life and give total priority to the spiritual in my life. 'I seek blessings to achieve the essence of this life – *inspire me to grasp life's essential meaning* – which really is the essence of spiritual practice'. Feel that request within yourself. Think, 'May I be blessed not to waste my time for the wrong priorities' – *not be distracted by pointless activities*. May this realization become part of my habit, my way of thinking.

Light and liquid come from the Merit Field, particularly from Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang. It washes away all the obstacles in general and in particular the obstacles to recognizing imperma-

<sup>484</sup> Gehlek Rimpoche, *Six Session Guru-Yoga*; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Guide to Dakiniland*, p. 259-260.



nence and embracing the human life, particularly laziness, wasting our life, the doubts, the thinking that life is permanent and also not paying attention.

All of them are completely washed away from our physical, mental and emotional system and we become pure.

The development stage of recognition of life, its difficulty to find it, its importance and its being impermanent – all of them develop.

### Method of Achieving Fortunate Future Lives

*Ngen song dhu ngel bar wei me jik nay  
nying nay kon choh sum la kyap dro zhing  
dik pong ge tsoh thah dag drup pa la  
tsön pa lhur len je par jin gyi lop.*

- st. 52. Aghast at the searing blaze of suffering in the lower realms,  
I take heartfelt refuge in the Three Jewels.  
Inspire me to intensify my efforts  
To practice virtue and abandon vice.**

*Aghast at the searing blaze of suffering in the lower realms. Ngen song means the lower realms; duk ngel is suffering; jik nay means being afraid of that.*

What happens after death? Think about it: One day you really have to go, no matter whatever you may do. You may be in your twenties, thirties, forties, fifties, sixties, seventies, eighties or nineties and you have to go. This body of ours is contaminated. That is why we get sick. That is why we are so sensitive. When you are young and healthy, the condition of the body is good. Whatever you encounter then, you can deal better with it, whether it is illnesses, allergies or violence, or whatever, you have very strong resistance. When you get older you lose all of this. You get sick just from sitting on a cushion. The cushion itself can affect your allergy. You can get sick from dust, you can get sick from anything. You can probably get sick from your own skin. It does happen, it is reality. And you are going to die one day for sure, no question.

The moment you die, what happens to you? The mind, the consciousness, the Me, definitely does not disappear. You know it. There are kids who talk about their previous lives. Just don't cheat yourself by pretending that you don't know, by pretending that you haven't heard. Don't give yourself a false answer, saying it is not existent, just because you doubt it. Even if you have doubt, that is good enough. Many people will deny it altogether, because it is not scientifically proven yet. That is how you let yourself down. Pretending that it is not there will not make it go away. We know that. We can pretend that we are not sick. But we have got the disease inside and we are going to get sick, no matter how much we pretend. We try to hide, but we cannot. When it is rotten, everybody will smell it anyway. It is going to come out. But something has to happen after that. We can't remain in that rotten body. It is going to be burnt or buried or cremated. It is going to be eaten by birds. It is not there anymore.

Somehow we have to go and find another form. What kind of form is it going to be? A good one or a bad one? Who knows? If you are lucky you get a good one. If you are unlucky you get a bad one. Let's say you die and find yourself suddenly caught in a hell realm. Then what is going to happen? You are in a hot hell. The ground is burning. Think, when in a hot summer you walk on the beach, how the hot sand is burning you. Now, in the hot hell, the burning iron is the ground you are walking on. That is not enough. Fire is everywhere, every wall you look at is on fire. Even the roof is on fire. Everything is burning. What can you do? It is good to think about that. You can do virtually nothing. You can cry, scream and yell. You can't bang against the wall, because that will burn you more.

It has been helpful to me to observe what happened in a Chinese restaurant. They put living chickens on burning charcoals. This is hurting them so much that they pull out all their feathers from out their bodies and put them under their feet. But it is not helping. They finally die. The real delicacy of chicken leg is coming out of that. Likewise, think, 'I am in hell. My feet are burning. If I lie down all my body is burning.'

The only thing you can do is to take refuge to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha now. The cause of taking refuge, the fear, is this. It is the fear of falling into the lower realms. Also, think about the cold hells.

Actually, forget about the cold hells. Just think what it would feel like if you would have to stand out there in the snow naked for twenty minutes. In the cold hells you are stuck forever in extremely low temperatures, your body is cracking and becoming a piece of ice.

Then think about the surrounding hells. There is that swamp. All your friends and relations are on the other side of the swamp. They call out to you, 'Poor you, you are suffering over there. Come over here'. You try to walk through that swamp but it is full of razor blades which cut your body into million pieces. Then, by the time you get to the other side, all your friends and relations are on this side. You have to go back and forth like that. And these sufferings are still the light ones.

Then think about the hungry ghosts who can't get food for hundreds of years. Think about the animals. No matter how intelligent they may be, they can only convey a limited amount of messages to you. Their communication is completely below ours. They communicate among themselves, for sure. But that is very limited. Dogs can only bark. Cats can only miaou. Birds can only go 'chi chi chi'. That's all they can do. That is enormous suffering. Can you imagine that you have to give all your messages by barking? We are so attached to communication. The post service is not enough. We need Federal Express. That is not enough. So we have the telegraph. That is not enough. We also have the telephone. That is also not enough. We need cell phones. That is also not enough. On top of that we have e-mail. That is also not enough. Now we have palm pilots. That is not enough. Next we are going to put chips in our brain. That is still not enough. We are going to put computers into our reading glasses.

Imagine a person addicted to such a level of communication, reduced to just barking! How much suffering that will be. Or perhaps you will only be able to miaou or say 'chi chi chi'. Even if you are born as a human, but you are a yuppie, what would you do with your life? Or you may become a right-wing conservative, or a born-again person – like me, I am a born-again Buddhist. In each of these cases, when you think about that, take refuge.

You take refuge to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. The Buddha is also the Buddha of your own future. The Dharma is your own spiritual development. The Sangha is your own too. That is the way it goes. Buddha, Dharma and Sangha will not give you any guarantees. They are saying, 'If you make efforts to help yourself, we will help and support you. We will be there.' The responsibility lies with ourselves. The way how to take responsibility lies within the karmic system.

*I take heartfelt refuge in the Three Jewels. Nying nay* is from the bottom of the heart; *kon choh sum* is Three Jewels. You take refuge by meditating what it would be like to fall into the lower realms, particularly the hell realms. I have tried to avoid talking about the lower realms for a long time, particularly in America, because the Americans don't like it. I remember, once in a conference, Joseph Goldstein said, "Every Dharma person these days is avoiding talking about the hell realms, but if these really exist, aren't we doing a disservice to the people we are talking to?" That is true. The difference is that only you yourself can prevent yourself from falling into these levels. Only you can drag yourself out. You are responsible for your future. That is the reality. No second or third person can do or undo our deeds. That is absolutely true in spiritual and even in material life. We know it. In ordinary life, if we have a responsibility and if we don't do it or make arrangements for somebody else to do it, it will never get done. But somehow we don't like to know that we are responsible for fixing our future. We don't like to acknowledge it – even those of us in the Dharma practice. We know it, but we still want somebody else to tell us what to do. The whole teaching, the whole Lama Chöpa, Yamantaka, Vajrayogini, every single damn thing we teachers say when we open our mouth, is telling you what to do. But it is not enough. You want somebody to hold you by the hand and tell you, 'Now you sit down, now you read, now you say that.' I did not know you are only four years old!! So we know it, but we don't do it.

You can take refuge to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. But do you think they will come down from the sky and take you out of here? No way, Jose. You are the only one who can do it. You help yourself, I help myself. By taking refuge, listening and following, you are not going to fall into the lower realms, not just because you say *Namo Gurubhye, Namoh Buddhaya, etc.* a few times. That alone is not going to protect you. You have to follow the advice, follow the karmic system, avoid negativities, purify them, build positivity. That will protect you, that will help you. That is your pocket money to get through. That is your ticket.

In short, as Shantideva says:

Why be unhappy about something  
 If it can be remedied?  
 And what is the use of being unhappy about something  
 If it cannot be remedied?

*Bodhisattvacaryavatara, ch. VI, vs. 10*

If something can be remedied, why do you remain sitting in the doomed situation? Correct it, because you have every right, every freedom, every chance, every opportunity; take advantage of these and correct it. If there is nothing that can be corrected, why bother to worry? So, now it is time to take action, instead of sitting and worrying about falling into the lower realms. By taking refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha you are doing something, taking action. You're not sitting there stuck, you're doing something; you take refuge. The essence of taking refuge is to rely on the Three Jewels.

*Practice virtue and abandon vice.* *Dik pong* means cut out all negativities. Why do you have to cut all negativities? Because they are the cause of suffering. How do you cut them out? By applying the four powers. And then accumulate positive karma, *ge tsoh*, as much as possible (*ge* means virtue and *tsoh* accumulation). Why? Because that is the cause of happiness. So, by knowing that the one causes suffering and the other causes joy, and both are right in front of you, now do it. Don't just sit there crying, because that's silly. Do it; take refuge and follow this *dik pong ge tsoh* business. That's what it is.

Creating positive karma does *not* depend on how much time you spend on meditation and practice. Please remember that; it is very important. Lots of people think that accumulation of merit means they have to spend time saying prayers and doing meditation. Saying prayers and doing meditation is definitely for that purpose, but we don't *have* to do it that way. It is not the only thing!

Most important is to have a good motivation, to have kind, compassionate thoughts. Try to let kindness be the basis of your life. Let compassionate kindness really be the source of your existence. Let it be the strength of your actions. Let it be the energy of your being. Let kindness and compassion be part of everything you do and are. I'm very much tempted to say, "Eat with kindness, lie down with kindness, die with kindness." If you do that, every single damned mundane thing you do will be positive karma. If you have kindness and compassion as part and parcel of yourself, every single thing you do will become positive. That is the best way to accumulate merit. If you quit everything and go somewhere to spend twenty-four hours in solitary practice, you won't be able to do it, no matter who you may be, young or old, healthy or sick. But you can always live with kindness and compassion twenty-four hours a day, no matter what else you're doing. I think that makes life easier, better, and wonderful. It is a very easy way to avoid the negative and build up the positive.

Doing that will give you the assurance and comfort of having a good future rebirth, because when you have abandoned all negativities and built the positivities, then there is no way you can get a bad future rebirth because there is no cause left for a bad rebirth. So eradicating the negative karma that we already have through purification, and not creating anymore negative karma ensures you not to have the bad rebirth.

So you think and make a request,

In case death comes early, and there is the possibility of falling into the lower realm and I have the fear of suffering there and I don't have the control in my own hand, the next best thing I can do, is go to someone who can help and protect me. So I take the heartfelt refuge in Buddha as a guide and in Dharma as the actual protection and in Sangha as companion, supporter and defender.

I contemplate the qualities of the Buddha, the capability and effectiveness of the dharma, the support and help of the sangha. Taking refuge in Buddha Dharma and Sangha means I should follow the advice to practice virtue and abandon vice. Please, inspire me to intensify my efforts to practice virtue and abandon vice, to discard negativity and build positivity.

My request is granted. Light and liquid comes and purifies my negativities in general and particularly the negativity of doubt and not having the appropriate trust in Buddha Dharma and Sangha. All are washed away

Also in particular it purifies doubting whether virtues give good result and vices give terrible result. All are washed away and I become pure.

### **In Common with the Intermediate Scope**

‘In common with the medium level’ has basically two parts: first, building interest in liberation and second, the method by which you can liberate yourself.

Do you notice how ‘in common with the lower level’ tries to draw you out of your total absorption in this life, and to build interest in future lives. Now ‘in common with the medium level’ goes beyond that, saying, “Well, a future life, even a good, wonderful one, is just another life. What about getting totally liberated?” You may become a yuppie in the next life, but until you are out of samsara completely, nothing has been settled. You have only prevented falling into the lower realms once. This draws your interest to liberation. The Lamrim is a very gradual process, wonderfully worked out. If you think carefully and follow these steps, you automatically get pushed from one to the next. It is very systematic and works extremely well to get the essence out of life.

### **Generating Interest in Self-Liberation**

*Lay dang nyön mong ba long drak tu truk  
dhuk ngal sum gyi chu sin mang pö tser  
tha mey jig rung si tso chen po lay  
thar dö shug drah kye way jin gyi lop.*

- st. 53. **Violently tossed by waves of addiction and karma,  
Devoured by three sea-dragon sufferings,  
Inspire me to develop the fierce determination to be free  
From this endless, fearsome ocean of existence.**

No matter what future life we attain, even if it is a good one, what is our condition going to be? Life is like an ocean with so many waves, good ones and bad ones. If we look into our life, we find it is absolutely true. We get lots of good waves and lots of bad waves, high and low ones, one after the other. These strong waves (*ba long* is waves and *truk* is shaking) are caused by delusions and karma.

Strong waves are fine if it's a safe ocean, but it's not. There are a lot of sharks or sea dragons: the *suffering of suffering*, the *suffering of change*, and *pervasive suffering*. *Dhuk ngal sum*: the three sufferings are the sharks in there and they will get you, eat you, bite you, harm you, because you don't have control. They are coming from all directions. There are sharks everywhere. You are in the middle of it. You have got that gadget strapped to your body that actually attracts sharks, like in the movie *Jaws*. These sharks are coming after you because you actually giving them the signal ‘I am here!’ Actually, the signals are our addictions. We are telling the sharks, ‘You can get me, I am still here.’ Therefore, why don't we get out of the water completely? Why do we have to stay here and be afraid that the sharks are going to get us, that sufferings are going to come? Why don't we get out of it altogether? We really need to develop the desire to escape these sharks. Get out of that water. If not, you must still be in love with the sharks. You have to get out, because the conditions you are in are not good enough in there. But we still cannot let go of certain picnic spots that we experience from time to time, for a couple of weeks perhaps. We are longing. We still look back. That is our habit.

In Tibet there is a huge mountain pass you have to cross called *Kampala*. When you reach the top of that pass the horses will always look back. The traveler may be wondering why the horses look back. It is because the poor horses left half of their food down there. We do exactly the same. We cannot let it go. We still have something down there. So we like to look back. We always do.

Even when people die they like to look back. No matter who they are, they always want to look back. Some people leave a legacy behind. I certainly don't have a desire to leave a legacy for whatsoever. I never even think about that. You know two, three years ago, all the TV stations were talking about Clinton's legacy. But what the hell, when you are gone, you are gone. But everybody wants to look back on something. Some leave their children behind to look back on. Some leave their disciples behind. Some build institutions ‘in the memory of Late So and So’. But you never know. Perhaps the late So and So could be a cockroach near the door of that memorial, trying to climb the wall. This is reality. Some

would like to build a big temple or church to look back. The other day I met somebody from the *Church of Today*. He told me that a certain pastor had built that huge church and then he died. That's why he had to come over now. Some build images. At least there is something there. Some people would like to build a beautiful house or assemble a huge collection of wealth. But the individual is gone.

*Threefold suffering.* Tremendous sufferings we have. So many people have *physical* sufferings. The girl we visited yesterday [in the handicapped people's home], cannot move at all, lives her life on a bed totally; you can't shake hands, you can't touch anything, she is full of pain. But even so, she is very active. She contacted Jewel Heart, typing her e-mails by mouth. Really, our physical pains are tremendous. And all have some thing or another, and basically, when you become older, something will be wrong anyway. That is part of life, the normal process. Then think about the *mental* sufferings. Think about those people who are in institutions. I'm thinking about the west only. If you talk about other parts of the world, there is much more, you know that. Think about those mentally suffering people, how big their suffering is. We encounter borderline people. How much they suffer, being sometimes on this side, sometimes on that side, sometimes on the border. And after all that, we come in the picture. We are the *emotional* sufferers. Emotionally we suffer and create suffering for ourselves. And we make others suffer too, not intentionally, but unintentionally we do that all the time. You call that 'giving a hard time'. And all of this is provided to serve our ego. It is our ego's demand, and we answer that. It is ego's call that we answer in the form of protecting myself. And when some people don't have that, they suffer in the form of right and wrong, fair and unfair. Somewhere ego can find a point where it can torture is. I'm not joking, honestly! Whatever the point may be – every sympathy, every softness, any good thing, ego will cash somehow to make us, ourselves, suffer. That is our situation, believe it or not. That's why we have pain, we suffer, we have problems. And still, we are only talking about the *suffering of suffering*.

Then we have this *suffering of change*. Some people can't sleep when they change sleeping places. That is joke, but in the suffering of change every pleasure becomes pain. And every pleasure that fades, we are missing and we try to get it back, and all of those.

Then we have *pervasive suffering*. It's is everywhere, it's creped in in our system, it is in whatever we do. Even in the best of the best moments there will be suffering. For example, if you become a Miss Universe, of course you're happy to be Miss Universe, *but.....* Even when you are in the best of health, you want something more here or something less or whatever.

'In common with the medium level' is about the basic principles of karmic functioning. Karma has four basic characteristics: 1) karma is definite; 2) karma is fast growing; 3) one does not meet with the karma one did not create; 4) one is bound to meet the result of karma one has created, no matter how long it may take.

What does our karma do? Because of karma, the good work we do produces positive life within samsara, the bad work we do, produces suffering. We don't yet have uncontaminated karma; everything we do is contaminated karma, good, bad, or even our neutral karma or what we call unshakable or un-moving karma. Our good karmas will give us a result of a better future; our bad karmas make sure that we'll take rebirth as a piglet. So, whether you get the good karmic result of being born in a Rockefeller family or the bad one of being born in a pig family in Calcutta swamp, it will still be in samsara.

And it continues! The continuation of our identity is totally influenced by ignorance, attachment, anger, hatred, and jealousy, all of them. As a result, we continue in this particular circle, wherever we may be, year after year, life after life, century after century, eon after eon; from the limitless beginning we circle round continuously!

This is our real problem, not man-made problems, such as a little hurt here, a little emotional upset there. From nearby, our emotional problems are huge, but when you look from this point of view, they become tiny by comparison. Compare it, life after life, century after century, eon after eon, we continuously go on, sometimes better, sometimes worse, it goes on and on and on and on, and the same old familiar things are repeated all the time. We keep on eating our sweet-sour soup.

Where is the culprit? What is the problem? Who is really causing it? To find that out is our main job, our main mission in life. "What is my mission?" If you have that question in mind, here is your answer. This is your mission: to find the culprit who causes you to go on and on and on. What causes this under different conditions, under different disguises, continuously? Where is this culprit? And, how can I deal with it, how can I get rid of it?

Buddha very kindly, very gently, presented the *Four Noble Truths* and the *Twelve Links of Interdependent Relationship*. That's how basically 'in common with the medium scope' is taught. Not taught as intellectual knowledge, but shown as a practice, so that by applying that method to our life, we can literally reverse the circle or stop the chain of movement into life after life.

As long as you don't know that you can get out of it, you probably think you can't help it. Buddha, however, tells you, "Hey, there is a way out. Don't just stay there. There's a way out. What you need is interest in liberation." Don't think of seeing the way out of some small little difficulty; think of the life-after-life suffering. There's a way out of *that* and that's what we're talking about.

We seek the determination to liberate ourselves totally.

Even I have taken refuge and do follow the positive and negative advice, that simply guarantees me rebirth for one perfect life only. Though it may be a perfect life, positive and negative influences are there. When negative influences becomes very powerful, it becomes very easy to get off the track. So, no certainty.

Moreover, the sufferings in samsara go on like the waves of an ocean and are very difficult to bear. It is like a miserable prison. Even if occasionally we get [reborn in] some picnic spots, those are like Satan's garden.

Unless we all are totally free of all this, wherever we go, whatever we do, whatever type of birth we take, there is no place where there is no suffering. So I really need to have interest to free myself from all those pains. May I develop this desire for liberation immediately. I pray and I seek your blessings to do that.

Light and liquid and blessings come from the body of the Supreme Field Merit in general and particularly from the masters at the centre. It purifies my negativities in general, and particularly desire and attachment are washed away completely out of my system. Blessings comes an I develop an interest in liberation. I have developed interest in seeking nirvana.

### Method of Achieving Self-Liberation

*Zö ka tsön ra dra wei khor wa dhi,  
ga wa tsel tar thong wey lo pang nay,  
lap sum phag pai nor gyi dzö zung te,  
thar pei gyel tsen dzin par jin gyi lop.*

- st. 54. **Having ceased to view this unbearable prison  
Of cyclic existence as a pleasure grove,  
Inspire me to raise the victory banner of freedom  
By practicing the Three Higher Trainings,  
The treasure of extraordinary beings.**

When we see the samsara as an unbearable prison it is necessary for us to raise the banner of freedom.

Remember the story that Shariputra told, one of the Buddha's main disciples who was [always] traveling [with him]. He saw something funny and started laughing. When asked what was so funny, he said,

I just saw that little farm with the pond at the back. There is a family, a man, woman and baby. They also have a little dog. They were eating fish together. What happened is this: The father had died and has taken rebirth. He had strong attachment to the family and farm, and was reborn as a fish in the pond. The mother died and took rebirth as that dog in front of the house. The son's bride had been raped by some boy from another house. Her new husband came to know and he had a fight with that guy in which he killed him. Through his strong attachment that guy took rebirth as the child of that couple. So now it so funny. The family holding that baby as someone so precious are holding their previous enemy who raped the bride. They are enjoying eating the fish and it happens to be their father. The dog that demands to chew the fish bones happens to be the mother. Thinking about that I can't help but laugh.

This is the situation. It is reality. We are there. We can't see it, because something called 'Death' is standing in between. If you like to continue, that is how we continue. Look at what is happening in our lives: is it really controlled and planned? Many things are not. I didn't plan to be diabetic, right? So it is with everybody. We have problems, including the way we look and how we feel, but we didn't plan it that way. That shows our lives are uncontrolled. Some things in life are nice because of our positive karma; some are bad because of our negative karma, but as long as we are in this condition, this is going to happen again and again. Why endure it? Let us pass a resolution and say, "I am tired of this, I want out!" This first line tells you to look at samsara as a prison, difficult to bear. *Zö ka* means unbearable; *tsön ra* means like a prison.

*Cyclic existence as a pleasure grove.* The second line says that our dualistic mind deceives us. The biggest deceit is that we take samsaric pleasure as a permanent solution. We do. Samsara looks like a wonderful garden where you can have tremendous joy. That's how we see it, and that is why attachment is called the glue of samsara. Looking at samsara as a wonderful garden because there happen to be a few picnic spots, is the biggest deception of our deluded mind. So, if you are intelligent and educated spiritually, that's where you have to pay attention.

The third and fourth line now. To escape this, *the three higher trainings* of the mind are given: training in morality, training in concentration, training in wisdom. These three higher trainings, the treasure of special persons, can prevent you from being deceived by the delusions. Isn't that very simple, straightforward, and to the point? *Lap sum* means three trainings; *phag pa* is *arya* or special. If you have these, you are holding a banner of liberation. So think, "I seek your blessing to be able to hold the banner of liberation."

Audience: Do you have to have renunciation before you gain wisdom? Or from affiliation with wisdom teaching do you get renunciation?

Rinpoche: Good question. I didn't say you have to have renunciation first, nor did I say that wisdom helps renunciation arise. Wisdom definitely will help to bring the mind of seeking liberation. In one way, all these Lamrim steps are actually wisdom. Wisdom sort of gradually builds. You really can't point out, "Ha, here I got wisdom, this is it." To answer your question, yes, wisdom and renunciation, the determination to be free, compliment each other on various levels. Without wisdom you can not cut the root of samsara, but your desire for liberation does not depend on seeing emptiness. That's what it is.

Wisdom is a very broad word, but narrowly defined it is 'seeing emptiness'. However, seeing emptiness has different levels. First, what you see is *followed on learning*<sup>485</sup>; second, what you see is *followed on thinking*<sup>486</sup>, which is analyzing; and third, what you see is *encounter by meditation*. When you begin to get to that level you say, "I would like to talk about it, but I can't really say it." I told you earlier that it is like a dumb and deaf person who has had a dream; he can't describe it.<sup>487</sup>

So, the interest in liberation does not depend on emptiness, but it does depend on wisdom, whatever wisdom you have even now. It is wisdom pushing things. Thank you.

The essence of the practice 'Common with the Medium Level' is to recognize samsara as suffering and nirvana as peace. It is developing aversion to samsara and a liking for nirvana. It is actually recommended to look into every samsaric existence as nothing but an unbearable prison. It is actually true, except for a couple of picnic spots that we get caught in. In these we are getting something which we enjoy and get attached to. Then we always look back and can never get it back. These are what the picnic spots are. We can never get back to them anyway. You can spend all your life trying to get back there and never get there. It is a wild goose chase. No matter what you do in samsara it creates suffering, not only the suffering of not getting what you want, but also you meet with a number of obstacles and all kinds of difficulties. Then you get some relief here and there, with the touch of some picnic spots. Then you lose them and thus it continues. That's what really samsara is.

Truly speaking, samsara is *the continuation of contaminated identity*. Every identity we take is contaminated, with or without form. That is actually samsara, that is what you are trying to get rid of. You are not trying to get out of a certain place in the literal sense. You are not trying to get out of Chicago or any other place. You want to stop the continuation of contaminated identity which constantly

<sup>485</sup> Tib. *sgra spyi*

<sup>486</sup> Tib. *don spyi*

<sup>487</sup> P. 174.

brings you suffering and will continue to do so, until you are liberated. It doesn't matter how high or how low in samsara you go, the situation continues. Liberation and samsara, both are within ourselves.

*Ego.* The cause of the continuous unbearable suffering actually is the ego, the self-protecting. What is this ego? Ego is completely confused. While we are in samsara our ego thinks this samsara is something nice. Ego fails to understand that samsara is like a prison. Ego thinks that what is impure is pure. Ego fails to understand that some of the sufferings are perceived by us as joy. Ego sometimes thinks impermanences are permanent. In other words, ego has four wrong perceptions:

- seeing subtle impermanences as permanent
- seeing subtle sufferings as joy
- seeing the impure as pure
- seeing self or "I" as something belonging to us, while there isn't.

Because of these wrong perceptions ego tries to enjoy cyclic existence as a beautiful garden where you can enjoy life. That's what they are talking about. (Sometimes these four are slightly different [presented]<sup>488</sup>)

But, with the influence of wrong perception the ignorance is growing: For example, our body isn't necessarily pure, but ego thinks it is. We ourselves are not necessarily superior, but ego makes us think we are. That's why others are wrong and I am right. That's why we think we cannot mix with certain people; ego makes you think that. Our life is impermanent, we know it, but ego makes you think for a while it is permanent; it is always there, we take it for granted. And because of this we take some subtle sufferings as pleasure. That's why the idea of pleasure grove is used here. All of those are ego.

Knowing that this is a wrong perception, we will look forward not to have such a perception, we don't even want it for a minute. So we need to correct that. In order to correct that it is necessary for us to make a big dent on the head of ego. And the only thing that can do that is the wisdom. The wisdom is the direct opponent of ignorance and can destroy this ego ghost.

In order to get this wisdom, a simple understanding of what wisdom is all about is not sufficient. That wisdom has to be based on stable concentration. And that stable concentration has to be based on discipline. That's why moral discipline, concentration and wisdom are the real basis on which ego can be destroyed. Therefore here it says, "*Inspire me to raise the victory banner of freedom by practicing the three higher trainings, the treasure of extraordinary beings*". The three higher trainings have been referred here as a treasure of extraordinary beings [Skt. *arya*, Tib. *phag pa*], because extraordinary persons don't treasure anything else except those three.

By my mind becoming perfect morality, perfect concentration and perfect wisdom, may I be able to cross the ocean of samsara.

So we pray that way and light and liquid comes from the body of the Supreme Field of Merit in general and especially from the master and purifies all negativities, particularly the negativities of wrong perceptions: impermanent as permanent, impure as pure, suffering as joy and self-holding.

All four wrong perceptions have been totally wiped away, and thus we get ourselves free from the samsara completely and reach to nirvana. Think it has happened.

*Summary.* To give the essence of the message. First, "Hey, your life from birth to death, that you care so much for, is great wonderful, no doubt, but it's not all there is; there's something called future lives, you should take interest." And when you get to the future life, "Yeah, it's the same type of thing you had before, whatever you have done a number of times is repeating again. Since there is way out, why don't you get out of it? Why aren't you interested?" It's like when a salesperson tells you, "Why not this one? It is better than that," and blah blah blah. And so, you start to think of buying whatever it is, because they said it was so great. Then when they ask you, "Would you be interested?" you say, "Sure." That's how they gradually sell it to you. Likewise here. Once you get to this level, they say, "Hey there's a way out, it is better over here. Why not take interest?" "Yeah, I recognize the problem." "Get rid of that problem

<sup>488</sup> Also see: Tsongkhapa, *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*, vol. I, p. 342, Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, *Tibetan Tradition of mental Development*, p. 37.



and go.” “All right but how? Tell me.” “There are three paths, the three higher trainings will take you there.” “That’s good, all right.”

Out of the four noble truths, Buddha has shared with us as the fourth one the truth of the path, the three baskets of teachings, carrying the messages of the three higher trainings.

Buddha gives you three baskets. First he gives you a basket which has bread in it, the stuff to make you solid, grounded; it makes you to sit down and *concentrate*, and, most of all, to have awareness. Then Buddha gives you a basket which contains peanut butter and blueberry jam, which will give you sweetness, a nice taste and a little more protein; that is *morality*, the basis which makes you not only grounded but sweet, nice, and kind, a well-behaved, good person. The third one is a basket with tea. You know, you have the bread, but unless there is something to drink, bread is difficult to digest. Therefore, you need *wisdom*, wisdom to be able to digest. Buddha has provided you with four o’clock tea.

In the morning you had ‘in common with the lower level’ seeking fortunate future lives, in the afternoon you have ‘in common with the medium level’, three baskets of four o’clock tea, which is some sort of advertising for the great dinner they’re going to give you in the evening, the dinner of Mahayana. Can afternoon tea fill your stomach completely? Is afternoon tea a good enough meal for the day? No. You want to have dinner. What is the dinner? The next scope.

### Advanced Scope

Now I may get out of suffering, but what will happen to my friend? That’s the second question. Now we are beginning the Mahayana path, which has two parts: how to develop bodhimind and, after developing bodhimind, what we need to do, the activities and responsibilities of Bodhisattvas.

All right, how do we develop bodhimind? The doorway to Mahayana is bodhimind, and bodhimind is rooted in compassion. Compassion is the root of bodhimind, compassion is the cause of bodhimind, compassion makes bodhimind necessary for the individual. So the bottom line, deep down, is compassion.

### How to Develop Bodhimind

This has two parts: causal development and actual form of development.

#### Causal Development of Bodhimind

This has three parts:

1. Seeing compassion as the root of developing bodhimind.
2. Cultivating bodhimind through exchange.
3. Other points of mind training.

#### Seeing Compassion as Root of Developing Bodhimind

*Nyam thak dro wa di kün dhag gi ma.  
yang yang drin gyi kyang pei tsül sam nay  
dhug pei bu la tse wei ma zhin du  
chö min nying je kye war jin gyi lop*

st. 55     **Recognizing that are my mothers  
Who have raised me in kindness again and again,  
Inspire me to develop authentic compassion  
Like a mother’s love for her only child!**

*All suffering beings.* That means every being that we’re looking at, is suffering, no matter whoever the person might be. Some may people look exited, some look depressed, some may be young, some may be old, some look healthy, some are high ranking, But all of them are just perceptions and projections. In reality everybody is suffering. In that respect they’re equal, the rich, the poor, the young, the old, the healthy, the sick. As the Seventh Dalai Lama says,

Look at any man or woman, high or low;  
They may differ in dress, character and strength,

But finally, enmeshed in misery, they are made one:  
 A melancholy scene, friends and relatives of equal bad fortune.  
*Melancholy Visions of Imperfection*<sup>489</sup>

*Developing the Bodhimind.* How does it work? Bodhimind grows out of the special mind; the special mind grows out of compassion; compassion is very strongly linked with love. Love and compassion go together; that is an absolutely accepted point and there's no difference in which comes first.

How does one develop love and compassion? There are two different systems, one that has come down from Chandrakirti, Atisha, and so forth, and one from Shantideva. The first system is the *seven stages* of development of bodhimind and the second is the *exchange stage* of development of bodhimind. Whether you do them either together or separately, both are capable of delivering the goods. In the *Lama Chöpa* they talk of both combined.

*Seven Stages development of the Bodhimind.* The first line says that all sentient beings are weak and suffering. *Nyam thak* means weak, suffering; *dro wa di kün* means all these people. Is this true? Yes, it is true. No matter that some may look bigger and stronger and others smaller and weaker, they are equal in suffering, equal in joy, equal in miseries. This line shows you *equanimity* by labeling all sentient beings as equal in suffering. *Dhag gi ma* means my mother. That is the introduction of *all beings as mother beings* – the famous Buddhist thing. All of them have been my mom at some time or other. Each and every time they have been so kind, have protected me and saved my life any number of times. Right? If you think of yourself as an adult over here and look at and label that elderly woman over there as mom, you probably will not appreciate this point, you may even get upset. However, just look at the kids here, and see how their mothers are reacting; we don't hear a thing, but whenever a kid says, "Waah," they hear it and they're on their feet. This will show you how much a mother really cares for her own kids. Particularly those of you who are mothers now will know exactly what I mean. Use this as is the example, rather than looking at 'what my mom did to me'. We especially tend to remember the bad things mom did to us, rather than the good things.

How much care and compassion mothers show! Even to the extent that if you take each of the moms here and ask them, "Are you willing, if necessary, to sacrifice your life to save your kids?" I bet that unless they are crazy, they will say "Yes." Or at least they will say, "I don't know," but when the conditions come together, they'll do it. That is the kindness of mothers. Think! When you were a kid, a number of times your mother showed that kindness. When you look at it that way, even if you find it hard to acknowledge too much, there will be some softness in your heart. That is the beginning of picking up this mind. So, that is *remembering the kindness*.

If you are indebted to somebody, unless you are a bad person, you're bound to *do something in return* for that person. That is normal, everybody will do it through the normal quality of being human. When you remember their help, how they were kind, often, very often, almost all the time, you not only acknowledge their kindness, but also come to realize that you owe them a lot.

When you owe them, you really have to care about them. Love is caring, not attraction, since attraction may be attachment. I normally don't say that because people enjoy attraction a lot, but attraction may be attachment. **Love** is caring, at least what I understand by love. Attraction may help to bring love, but attraction itself may not be love. *Dhug pei bu* is actually tells us the type of *love* this is. If a mother has only a single child, the care and attention she gives to that child is called *dhug pei bu*. If she has two or three or five kids, somehow she has to divide it, and I don't know whether anything gets exhausted or not, but the example here tries to intensify the idea. A mother's care for her only child; that is the measurement of love. It is very interesting: the verse doesn't just say *ma zhin du*, but *tse wei ma zhin du*, which means the kind mother, the mother who cares intensely, absolutely, for her only child. You may always complain about how mothers overdo it, about overprotectiveness and all that, but at the same time the caring is there.

When you say *tse wei ma*, kind mother, what does 'kind' really mean? It refers to *compassion*. Compassion makes sure you care; it's the sort of mind that cannot bear any suffering in the person you care about. Remember, we have talked many times about love-compassion being one single mind, one mind with different aspects. Now, this is the time to apply the things you heard.

<sup>489</sup> For the full text, see Glenn H. Mullin, *The Seventh Dalai Lama, Songs of Spiritual Change*, pg.136-142.

*Nying je* means compassion, and *chö min* gives you its measure, how good it is. Real, true compassion is spontaneous compassion. Until this stage, to feel compassion, we have had to make up our minds, to motivate, push, and correct it, so it is not *chö min*. It may not really be artificial, but it is not spontaneous. The measure of how compassion has grown within you is how spontaneous it is.<sup>490</sup>

### Meditation

If I obtain nirvana, which no doubt is peace, other beings still will be having the same difficulties I had. What is the connection between these beings and me? I am connected with them, of course. The connection is that they were my nearest and dearest many times in the past. Due to the experience of death and the time that has passed, we don't recognize or acknowledge each other. However, we have been connected many, many times. Not only are we related, but also I have had to rely on them for my total survival countless times. So, not only do I have a connection with them, I owe them a favor.

My friends, my nearest and dearest, are actually in a difficult condition. They are never okay. They are too tired of having the pain of samsara continuously. That is why they are called suffering beings. They are no other than the people we know, ourselves included. Wherever we look, these are the people that I care for and love.

All of them have been at one time or another my mother, again and again. Every time, as my mother, they have helped and nurtured me, helped me grow up and protected my life ten times a day. What I have received from all these people is tremendous. So I have to remember their kindness. Obviously, I have to care for them. My love and my care should be like a mother's love towards her only child. Such a love should be caring, compassionate. So I must recognise their situation and I must generate compassion.

May Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang bless me to be able to develop that greater compassion.

The verse talks about *authentic compassion*. That is true compassion, ultimate compassion, unlimited, unconditioned. In other words, this true compassion will not ask, 'What is in it for me?' That is what we do all the time in our culture. We like to do something, but we want to know 'What's in there for me?' That shows limitations, conditions. It is not ultimate compassion.

The following verses include all of the Lojong teachings. I also refer to transcripts of separate Lojong teachings I have given.<sup>491</sup>

### Cultivating Bodhimind Through Exchange

This has three parts:

1. Equalizing self with others.
2. Exchanging self for others.
3. Give and take.

### Equalizing Self with Others

*Duk ngel tra mo tsam yang mi dhö ching  
de la nam yang choh shey mey par ni  
dak dang zhan la kye par yö min zhen  
zhan dhe ga wa kye par jin gyi lop*

st. 56. **No one wants even the slightest suffering  
Or is ever content with the happiness they have;  
In this we are all alike.**

<sup>490</sup> Then follows the *special mind* and as a result of that the *bodhimind*. For the special mind see the commentary on verse 65 on p. 285. These Seven Stages are extensively taught in Gehlek Rimpoche, *Lam Rim Teachings*.

<sup>491</sup> Gehlek Rimpoche, *Lojong, Training of the Mind in Seven Points*; Gehlek Rimpoche, *Lojong, Training of the Mind in Eight Verses*.

**Inspire me to find joy in making others happy.**

*Equanimity – three levels.* At the beginning of the *Lama Chöpa* we talked about the Four Immeasurables and equanimity is one of them. That equanimity is: all sentient beings are equal suffering in samsara, we see this, we look into what causes it, we see it is attachment and aversion are the causes and we simply *pray*: "May all sentient beings be free from attachment and aversion". That is the equanimity of the four immeasurables.

Then in the Seven Stages of development of the bodhimind, there is something called equanimity that is different from that one. There it is equanimity *from our point of view*. We are perceiving all sentient beings classified into so-called enemies and so-called friends, because, again, we have this attachment and aversion. We try to block that perception that makes them look different and make it equal.

Then over here, in this verse there's again a slightly different equanimity [also called equality]. This is the Exchange Stage of development of the bodhimind and here we look *from the point of the sentient beings themselves*, what they want, what they're seeking. That is also equal: each one of those, whether enemies or friends, they are seeking joy and what they don't want is suffering. Whatever the individual person's attitude towards me is, there is no point for me to make a big distinction between human beings because of my attachment and aversion. In what they are seeking, there's no difference. They're all seeking joy, pleasure and happiness and they all don't want suffering. So I must equalize this strong feeling of desire and this strong feeling of rejection. The point here is that any action, any movement, any push, either from the point of grasping desire or from the point of rejection, creates pain towards people involved, which we know by our personal experience. Though pains caused by rejection are very strong, the rejecting person may not realize it. Equally, the grasping person may not recognize he or she is creating pain, but they do and that is why we sometimes find a lot of pain in relationships. Recognition of it, from all the angles, is number one key. The number two key: understanding that we equally create pain for each other. And number three: resolving to stop grasping desire and rejection of any human being.

So, though it's the same word, there are three different levels of equanimity, each one going deeper.

*No one wants even the slightest suffering -duk ngel- or is ever content with the happiness they have.* I don't even want the tiniest bit of suffering. No matter how much joy and pleasure I get, I am never going to be satisfied anyway. You, everybody, has the same thing. So we are all equal. But we don't recognize the comfort we have, when we do have it. We are still looking for something better. This discontent is one of our biggest problems. We are never content. There is always dissatisfaction. When we get something new, we are happy for one minute and thereafter we are discontented, whether it is something valuable in terms of money or comfort or whatever it is. We are never content. We never even realize that it is there. That is one of our biggest problems. It is true when you say, 'Whatever I want, I am not getting and whatever I don't want, I am getting all.' So, before you try bliss and void you should try the Lojong or *Training of the Mind*.

Here at the beginning of Lojong we are not saying, "I am you and you are me," nor "You and I are equal." What is emphasized here is a very important point:

Just like myself, each and everyone one does not want suffering. What I want and what you want is the same, what I don't want and what you don't want is the same. I don't want even a single tiny bit of suffering, and neither do you. We are equal in this.

Also, neither of us is satisfied by the joys we experience; we always want more and more till it gives us terrible pain. So there is no difference between the others and me, between what they want and what I want. We are also equal in this respect.

So, equalizing is really simple. Our desires are the same, our dislikes are the same, and our dissatisfaction is the same. This is a very important point. There can't be any argument about this. I don't want pain, you don't want pain, and that's how we equalize. It is not, "I am equal to you, you are equal to me." It is that there is no difference between what I want and what you want, what I don't want and what you don't want. So we are the same with regards to that.

Then what is different? The difference is when others experience joy and I don't, I get jealous. This does happen. And what does jealousy give us but more suffering, more pain? To recognize this is important.

If you really care about a person, you are happy when that person gets something nice even though you yourself want it. At present this is true only for a few people that we love. Our problem is the limitation to these few individuals. This is reason enough to practice the exchange.

Between what they need and what I need, what they want and what I want, there is no difference. They want joy and happiness, and I want that too. What they want and what I want is the same thing, is equal, so why don't we work together? Let's go.

So, looking at all those mother sentient beings, knowing their situation, no matter whether any one of them tried to do anything to hurt or harm me, from my side I will not let my mind be controlled nor being influenced by hatred or obsession. I will see all of them as equal, completely. From my side, from my point of view, my motivation, my actions, I must treat them equally. May I be able to practice this great equanimity.

If possible, I should be able to choose them before myself, but when I can't do that, at least I should be able to work with them together.

I pray and seek the blessings of the Supreme Field of Merit to be able to see that I can change my attitudes, so that if others get good things, instead of getting jealous I can learn to rejoice and be as happy as I would be for myself.

That last point might not exactly follow the words here, but it is true from the practical point of view. The first thing we need to get rid of is jealousy.

The Lojong tells you to begin with somebody you really care about, rather than bringing in all sentient beings filling up the space. Instead of doing that, bring in one person that you really care about, that you are totally devoted to, like a mother to her child.

## Exchanging Self for Others

Now the actual exchange of self with others. That has four parts:

1. Recognizing the faults of self-cherishing.
2. Recognizing the benefits of altruism, cherishing others.
3. The conclusion.
4. The actual exchange.

## Recognizing Faults of Self-Cherishing

*Rang nyi che par dzin pei chong ne di  
mi dhö duk ngel kye pei gyur thong ne  
le len dey la khön du zung je te  
dag dzin dhön chen jom par jin gyi lop*

- st. 57. **Seeing that the chronic disease of self-cherishing  
Is the cause of my unwanted suffering,  
Inspire me to put blame where blame is due,  
And vanquish the great demon of clinging to self.**

*Self-cherishing and clinging to self.* Where is all the dissatisfaction in our life coming from? The dissatisfaction with our companion, with the things we use, with our comfort zone or whatever it is, where is that coming from? Discomfort is not so bad, it is just lack of comfort, but when you intensify that a little more, then that is suffering. All our sufferings, physical, mental and emotional illnesses, sufferings of dissatisfaction, pains, all come from the one single source called 'clinging to self'.

Self-cherishing is one thing. Yes, it is a source of trouble, no doubt. However, it might not be the source of all trouble. Self-cherishing makes suffering more intense and vivid and stronger than it really is. But it is really the clinging to self that is the root problem. Buddha leaves no doubt where the suffering comes from. Officially it is called ignorance, but whatever name you use, ego, ignorance, clinging to

self, *etc.*, this is the deep down queen ant.<sup>492</sup> Even some of the methods that are actually trying to get rid of the problem, not even the origin, but even those that only touch the symptoms, are sometimes hitting too close to home. We call that ‘pushing the wrong button’. We say that negative karma and delusions, neuroses and addictions are the source of our suffering. But all of them are coming from the self-clinging. Self-cherishing is the product of self-clinging. Without self-clinging, self-cherishing will not come. When you really refer to the cause of unwanted suffering, you are looking for the clinging to self.

*The culprit.* The first step is looking at the faults of self-cherishing. Up to now what have we had? We have had very strong self-cherishing, without much of the altruistic attitude. We have had some altruism, that’s why we have good things in our lives as well as the bad. But most of the time, until now, we have had this self-cherishing attitude. And where does that get us? Cherishing ourselves, we try to make ourselves important and try to protect our ego. But then, we get hurt, physically, emotionally, or spiritually, by anything that comes near. We get all of these pains just by trying to be of service to our ‘queen ant’ or ‘queen bee’. This actually has been our boss who enslaves us and makes us to do things we should not be doing, causing us lots of trouble. All just to protect the ‘queen bee’.

So what does it get us? Only samsaric things, sometimes a few nice ones to keep us circling round, but most of the time miseries and problems. This verse tells us that all our sufferings are because of our ‘queen bee’. It is true, really. Hurt, pain, not enough recognition or acknowledgement, every single thing that makes us miserable is because the ‘queen bee’ is not satisfied. Moreover, to protect it, we indulge in all sorts of negativities.

It is *chong ne di*, like a *chronic disease*. Now, if you want to be of service to yourself, recognize that this is your enemy, the true enemy that makes you suffer throughout life and life after life. If you want to be angry, get angry with this. If you want to take revenge, take revenge on this. If you want to destroy something, destroy this. If you want to kill, kill this one. If you want to do exorcism, do it on this, the ego-cherishing within us. But unless and until we see that this is the cause of all our suffering, we will not be convinced that we need to destroy it. So it is very important to pay attention on this point. I pray to the Supreme Field of Merit to be able to destroy this powerful monster ego-grasping within me.

If you want to meditate on something at this point, meditate until you really see the faults of self-cherishing. Superficially we already acknowledge it, because society also disapproves of selfishness, but that is not good enough. We must deeply, properly, see and acknowledge these faults. Once you do that, you actually take a tremendous step forward, you really make a big springboard jump on this point. If you can see that all your troubles are because of the ‘queen bee’, then you’ll make it through. If you don’t, then you have to struggle. That’s what it is. So you can only seek blessings and help to be able to realize this. Think,

The culprit that causes me constant trouble is my ego-grasping, my ego-cherishing thoughts, the thoughts that ego really wraps me in as a sort of ‘protection’.

We really do think we’re protecting ourselves, wrapping ourselves in all these delusions. But in fact, what we’re actually doing is wrapping ourselves in a lot of buttons. Wherever we’re touched, there are buttons that get pushed. That is exactly what this culprit has done, it has covered us everywhere with tremendous numbers of buttons. Like the Hindu-Buddhist mythological deity Rahula who has a thousand eyes covering its body, we provided our ego with a million buttons on our body, so that whenever anybody touches us in any way whatsoever, it is sure one of our buttons is pushed. Then we go ‘bzzzz’, and that is a problem. That is the work of ego-grasping.

What bothers me, what problem I face for having that great equanimity, is my strong self-cherishing, [or] my ego-grasping. It is the doorway to suffering. It is a chronic disease that continuously makes sure I suffer. This is the real enemy, the real devil within me.

Ego-grasping within me has created my troubles life after life, century after century, eon after eon. This is the true culprit and if I have the guts I should recognize this as my enemy. My enemy is not outside, but inside me. This is my enemy, the real self-centered ego living within me. This is my dictator, is my ‘Hitler’, my ‘Mao’.

<sup>492</sup> The queen bee is Rinpoche’s metaphor for the mind of ego-grasping which is the cause of our suffering.

That is really the point. This is how you recognize it.

I pray to the Supreme Field of Merit that I may be able to totally destroy it. Light radiates from the body of the Supreme Field of Merit and within me and all sentient beings the darkness of the self-centered ego is totally cleared. And I become pure.

We often talk about purification. But what we really have to purify is this one, the root of all impurity within us. Remember, we talked about at the time of death going back to the original source, which I called primordial mind, and recognizing you're not pure you get bounced back<sup>493</sup>. Even that bouncing back sort of rejection that we experience from ourselves, from our pure nature, is because of this problem. We somehow picked it up on the way, to sort of to protect ourselves, to safeguard ourselves. We keep on thinking this is the real key and we are hanging on to it, grasping and holding it. This particular point of clinging to self is the real source of our fear. Then, because of this fear we get what we call twisted personalities. You try to do the best for you, you want to do the best thing for yourself and it just won't work; you work so hard and you get twisted yourself. And all emotional sufferings are coming out of it. Even in the Lojong itself it says, "Put all the blame on the one". So, when you really want to help yourself, there you are.

Drukpa Kunleg<sup>494</sup>, the founder of the Drukpa Kagyu, was once asked by a ruling family in Lhasa to do exorcism on their son, the prince, who was ill. He came, had a big torma made and started doing the exorcism. At the stage of the ceremony when he was going to throw the torma, he went outside to the east, but there was no harmful spirit there, he went to the south, the west, the north, nobody there; then he brought it back in the house, went upstairs, went into the bedroom of the ruler where also the sick prince was sleeping: 'O, Here you go!' and he threw the torma on the ruler. In that way Drukpa Kunleg pushed the right button, the button of the ego. That's how the exorcism was done.

We can't yet do it, but spiritually high-developed persons will not ask their protectors for protection from troubles, disturbances, or illnesses. They seek protection by saying, "Give us more trouble, so that we can really destroy this ego." Instead of asking, the way we do, "Don't give us trouble, help us," they say, "Give us more trouble, so that we can really see the ego, really feel it, and then destroy it." That's how it works.

### Benefits of Cherishing Others

*Ma nam che zung de la gö pei lo  
tha yei yön ten jung wei gor thong ne  
dro wa dhi dha dha gi drar lang kyang  
so lay chei par dzin par jin gyi lop.*

st. 58. **Cherishing beings and securing their happiness  
Is the gateway that leads to infinite excellence.  
Inspire me to hold others more dear than my life,  
Even when I see them as enemies.**

This is the opposite. If you give up self-cherishing and appreciate people and cherish them, if you develop the compassion that wishes to remove suffering from people and develop the love that wants to bring joy to people, it is the opposite to the source of all suffering. It is the source of all qualities. When you realize that, then even if everybody becomes your enemy, you will still cherish them more than your own life.

Once you are able to get the inside 'queen bee' out of your system, with what can you replace it? Altruism. Here I can see that the word altruism is perhaps too weak. More than that is meant here. To replace ego-cherishing, you need a source of inspiration, something that really pushes you to develop further. You need compassion. Compassion comes out of cherishing other people.

When you have a mind that wants to benefit and liberate all others, what will that give you? That mind will give you ultimate enlightenment. Are you with me? Ultimate enlightenment is unattainable so long as

<sup>493</sup> See p. 229.

<sup>494</sup> Also see Gehlek Rimpoche, *Lam Rim Teachings*. Literature: Keith Dowman, *The Divine Madman*.

you have self-cherishing. When you cherish, care about, and love others, are committed and willing to go beyond for the sake of others, then that mind can give you enlightenment.

Seeing this is difficult for us because of our ‘delusion problem’. We don’t see the right thing, the truth, we always see the wrong thing, false delusions, because we are so used to doing this. Out of habit we always think, “I have to protect myself, who else is going to protect me?” Out of habit we think, “I have to do this for myself, otherwise who’s going to do it?” (This is actually true, you do have to do it for yourself, but we also habitually think, “I come before all the others,” right?) I mentioned once that if a crazy gunman walked in here and started shooting, then we would see who was hiding behind whom. You would definitely feel, “I want to hide behind everybody.” That’s how we cherish ourselves, because of the ‘queen bee’.

When you are finally able to relax, let self-cherishing go, and cherish others, then you have the source of all development. So much so that even if everybody becomes your enemy, even then you don’t get upset, because helping them is going to give you a tremendous amount of benefit for yourself. It doesn’t say ‘for others, but ‘for yourself’. The true me will benefit, not the ‘queen bee’. Therefore, if you love yourself you must love others. If you want help, you must help others. To be of service to others is the source of all achievement.

[I know that] cherishing others is the gateway to joy and happiness. It is also the gateway to qualities, spiritual development, ultimate enlightenment – all good things. With this firm understanding, no matter whether any single one or a group turns out to be my enemy, may I even then cherish them more than my own life. May I be blessed to be able to choose cherishing others over cherishing self. May I be able to replace that devil [of self-cherishing or ego-grasping] within me by this compassion and love. I seek the blessings of Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang and the total Supreme Field of Merit. I also pass a resolution here, committing myself to hold this mind as a dear commitment of my life.

You can bring the complete Lojong in here at this point. This is the quality of the Lama Chöpa. You can almost bring in everything. You can put your sadhanas in it, you can bring the Lojong in, you bring the complete Lamrim in. It is the jewel box, containing all jewels.

## Conclusions

*Dhor na ji pa rang dhön kho na dhang  
thup wang zhan dhön ba zhih zey pa yi  
kyön dhang yön ten yer wa tog pei lö  
dhk zhan nyam je nü par jin gyi lop.*

- st. 59. **In short, the naïve work for their aims alone,  
While Buddhas work solely to benefit others.  
Comparing the faults against the benefits,  
Inspire me to be able to exchange myself with others.**

As I told you before, there are two systems for developing the bodhimind: the seven-stage development according to Maitreya, Asanga, *etc.* and the exchange-stage development according to Manjushri, Shantideva, *etc.* We are doing the combination of both of these which is called the eleven-stage development. I always used to joke: This is the 7-11, open 24 hours.

*Exchange* does not mean that you sit here and I sit there now. It means exchanging what we deeply cherish, what is the most important thing we are trying to protect, and hold. The deepest aim in our mind is always, ‘How do I make myself happy and comfortable?’ Whatever we do, we have that in our life. Even this Dharma practice is aimed at making me better, making it easier for me to deal with my life, making me more comfortable. We say, ‘For the benefit of all beings’, but that is lip service. However, that is naïve. Look at the Buddhas. Are they happy? They are, absolutely, their only worry is we. Both, their own purposes and the purpose of others, are completed. So who has been wise, we or they? We have been worrying about ourselves, ever since we existed and we are still worrying about the same thing. Our deepest inside motivation is to make ourselves happy. As long as we have that desire and as long as we don’t have any other knowledge, we are continuously going to torture ourselves, all the time. That is certain. The Buddhas in their deepest mind are only worrying how they can help, and how to do this best.



Now draw your own conclusion. We have always cherished ourselves. The Buddhas have always cherished others. Just compare, who achieved the better result? The Buddhas definitely did, because they have been concerned for others. Who attained the good qualities? Who got the faults? Wake up, think about it, and make up your mind.

The *Bodhisattvacaryavatara* gives these debates in a very powerful way<sup>495</sup>, but you can also do them yourself. A direct comparison is made between Buddha and myself, and it is impossible for me to say, “I am right, Buddha was wrong.” We can say that to anybody else, but not to Buddha, right? That is obvious, absolutely clear. That’s why, no matter how strong the arguments the ‘queen bee’ gives you, there’s no way that ‘queen bee’ can challenge the Buddha. Look at what we have and what the Buddha achieved. It’s really a strong conclusion. At least that makes you think. At least it will make you wonder. That is the beginning; don’t lose it. Hold it and try to build it up but don’t go to extremes.

One problem you Americans have is that you swing from one extreme to the other. If you are high, you go very high; if you are low, you go down deep. Don’t do that. Don’t be a prayer flag on the house-top. When there’s a flag on the roof and the wind blows from the left, the flag will blow to the extreme right, and it goes to the extreme left if the wind blows from the right, flap, flap, flap, flap. You know why? Because it’s too light, there is no substance to it. But the flagpole will not go this or that way, because it is grounded. So be grounded! Don’t go to extremes either this way or that way; go slowly, carefully, be stable. That makes you happy. Really.

So, wake up! That’s what it is. If you wake up, if you recognize what needs to change, you can make a difference. If you don’t want that, nobody’s forcing you. We are here trying to make ourselves better, in better conditions. Well, here is the way to do it. If you don’t believe it, look at us and look at the Buddhas. That’s how you draw your conclusion.

### *Meditation*

Not only is this the culprit who gave me trouble, this is the one that has cheated me life after life. Thinking that I had to protect my ego, I started looking down on others, fighting with others, labeling them as my enemy. It has reached the point that my mind almost believes that everybody is out to get me and nobody is on my side. I’ve been cheated by this great big ego, the big boss inside that is controlling me and dictating to me my every move.

It has cheated me. Wherever I could get benefits, it stole them away, and wherever I could get into trouble, it has brought it on, just to suit the ego-feelings, the ignorant self-cherishing and grasping.

Therefore, now that I am beginning to see the light, let me draw my conclusions, see it through to the end and recognize where the benefit really comes from. Benefit results from compassion, not from this ego-flattering business. Dancing to the tune of ego has given me this trouble. I hope this time I can really get the message and see it clearly.

And not only see it in myself. If others act as my enemy, may I truly understand that they are also dancing to their own ego’s tune, that they are unable to see what is really true. May I not get my buttons pushed, but be able to help them.

I have a light; I have clearly seen the ego’s deception. May I be able to hold on to this realization, and may I be able to lead all sentient beings to understand this.

I must take care. My ego is so tricky, I can easily be caught again. It always has the dualistic view. Now it is telling me, “Wow, you are really brainwashed! Don’t you realize you are thinking in a really strange way? Aren’t you going to look after yourself? Aren’t you going to protect your own needs rather than going after this funny thing called compassion? If you don’t look after your own self-cherishing business, who is going to look after it? Don’t let yourself be brainwashed.” But then, this verse replies, “Hey, don’t worry about all that, just look at the record. What did the Buddhas do, how did they achieve their ultimate benefit? And what about the oth-

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<sup>495</sup> In Chapter Eight.

ers like me who constantly remain in trouble? Use your brain, don't let ego give you the run-around. Once again, protect your real interests."

Then light and liquid come from the Supreme Field of Merit, same as in all the previous verses. You think the obstacles have been cleared and that stage has been developed.

### Actual Exchange

*Rang nyi chei dzin gü pa kün gyi go  
ma nam chei dzin yön ten kün gyi zhi  
de chir dag zhan je wei nel jor la  
nyam len nying por jey par jin gyi lop.*

- st. 60. **Since cherishing myself is the doorway to all downfalls  
And cherishing others is the foundation of everything good,  
Inspire me to practice from my heart  
The yoga of exchanging self and others.**

Now comes the actual exchange. You don't have to switch seats! You acknowledge forcefully that you want to replace your 'queen bee' by cherishing others. That's what it is.

I normally don't teach much about the exchange stage. I normally use the excuse, "I don't know, I don't remember; I don't have the book." I try not to talk about it because of the extremes people can fall into. But the *Lama Chöpa* forces the issue; the verse is there, so I don't have an excuse.

So it is good to have an argument or debate between yourself and you. Think about it, bring in your counter-arguments, challenge, and give examples, but don't go to extremes. Go slowly, nice and steady; be grounded. If you are grounded, it's wonderful. If you are not grounded, if you are influenced too much by emotions, it doesn't do you any good. Be stable. The moment you are grounded, you will see, your spiritual progress moves to a different level. Work for grounding and stability. It is better for your life, better for your health, and much better for your spiritual path.

Once you have these thoughts and ideas, it is enough to start with, even if you still have some doubts. It gives you enough ground, it builds on what we talked about yesterday. And then you build up on that again. There is something to think about, definitely, no question. Unless you didn't hear me, unless you haven't read about it, there's no question that you do have to think about it and draw your own conclusions. When you have that as a base this exchange practice is suitable. This particular practice, actually, is suitable when the base is very stable; if the base is not stable, it might not be suitable.

Right now, exchanging our deepest purposes is a little long shot, if you are honest. But I suggest to try the Lojong before the bliss-void. When we use the word 'cherishing other', that does not go deep enough. When considering other peoples' concerns we do that on a very superficial level. Many of us do have some kind of desire deep inside. Go really deep, even deeper than the bone marrow. At the deepest level of our heart we always find the thoughts, 'I like to do something, I like to achieve this, I do want this.' No matter how much we pretend, but that is there.

We definitely talk a lot about the *object of negation*, we talk a lot about the *ego*. And here we are, that's the one. It is hard to find because we superficially cover it up completely. Really bad people will say the opposite of what they are really doing. If they are going to the east, they will tell you, 'I am going to the west.' They won't tell you honestly, they will lie. A little better than that, some people will tell you, 'I am going somewhere in that direction'. They don't hide that deeply, just a little bit. Others, when you ask them where they are going, will say, 'I am going out.' This is how we hide our desires or even deeper than that, our purpose, our mission, our goal.

There are a couple of straight-forward people who are very open and we call them crazy or wild. We label them with something. The beatnik poets were actually very open, straight-forward. I don't know whether every poet is that open, but they were. Usually we are good at hiding. We always hide our deepest self-cherishing points. Even Dharma practitioners think, 'I would like to do this, it may be better for me, or I like to do that, that may be better for me.' If you listen to yourself, you are saying, 'Better for me!' What does that tell you for the deepest held concerns?

So now exchange that space. Who is occupying that space? Switch that around. That is what Buddha is telling us. It is our deepest problem. We have to argue with ourselves. Can we do it? Is it worth-

while or is it so difficult that nothing can be achieved? Here you have all the reasons. You can do it, you should do it. Look at the Buddhas, they have done it. And they not only completed helping others, but also they completed their own aims. Then look at us who have been naïve. Comparing that brings to the conclusion that you can do it, and you should do it, because if you don't, you will remain stuck there, continuously. Compare the naïve and the wise. In the end, who made it? They got through. Here you can see that the source of all the suffering is deep inside. The achievement, the completion, is inside. Enlightenment is inside. Suffering, the cause of suffering is inside. Right deep down in our heart, that's where it is. Every suffering we experience comes from there. The source of joy is also at that point. Where we have 'Me, Me, Me', they have 'They, They, They'. This is the reason why we should exchange.

### *Meditation*

Doing service to 'queen bee' is the source of all my troubles. I acknowledge that.

I also see that cherishing others will give tremendous benefit. Now that I've opened my mind and wakened up, I hope I'll be able to change my self-absorption to concern for others, to switch my habitual attitude of serving the 'queen bee' into the altruistic attitude.

What I've been doing is wrong, what Buddha has been doing is right, so let me follow in his footsteps. Please help me be able to do that.

By looking at the historical record, I see that ego-cherishing is the source of trouble, and compassion the real source of joy. Therefore, may I be able to practice this exchange.

I want to change my ego-grasping and self-cherishing, my habitual behavior. I want to change it to subduing the ego and developing compassion. May I be able to accomplish this. May I be blessed to do it.

Light and liquid comes from the Supreme Field of Merit and all obstacles, all 'queen bees', are washed away. The altruistic attitude arises.

The next subject is *tong len* or 'give and take' practice. So, once you have made up your mind, *tong len* works. Until your mind is actually made up, *tong len* practice will not work; it will be totally superficial.

### **Give and Take *Tong-Len***

*Dey na je tsün la ma thuh je chen  
ma gyur dro wei dik drip duk ngal kun  
ma lü dha ta dag la meen pa dang  
dhag gi dhe ge zhan la tang wa yi  
dro kun dhe dang dhan par jin gyi lop(3x)*

- st. 61. **Therefore, supremely compassionate Lama,  
Inspire me to take the bad deeds, imprints and sufferings  
Of all beings to ripen upon me right now,  
And to give to them my happiness and virtue  
So that all beings may be happy. (3x)**

In Tibetan this verse has one extra line compared to the others which usually have four. This one has five. Four lines of this verse have been composed by Panchen Lozang Chögyen. However, many of his disciples, and particularly Takpu Dorje Chang, requested the Panchen Lama, if one extra line could be added, although it breaks the traditional poetry form. That line is: *Dey na je tsün la ma thuh je chen* – *Therefore, supremely compassionate Lama*. This is very powerful, very effective. You are saying, because of all the above mentioned reasons, kind and compassionate lama, help me to do this! *Dik drip* refers to causal negative actions; *duk ngal* is suffering, which includes the three types of suffering.

### *Meditation on tong-len*

What you are really doing here is a great work. Great work!

Start by visualizing all sentient beings right in front of you or around you. And if you can, think of a name and face of a number of them.

Then you pray, seeking the blessings of the Supreme Field of Merit to be able to take on the sufferings all beings are experiencing right now.

May I take all of these sufferings and causes on their behalf. That is, the suffering of suffering, the suffering of change, and the pervasive suffering – which are all result of negative actions – as well as everything that will cause them to suffer in the future.

May I take all negative actions and the resulting suffering from all beings onto myself, and give to them my own positive actions and resulting happiness. By my doing so, may all beings become happy and joyful.

My great protector, the kind and compassionate guru and the Supreme Field of Merit, please help me that all the sufferings of everybody else will fall on me and give all my positive virtues, happiness and joy and to all the others.

This is very powerful. This has to come from the heart. It will not work through moving the lips and singing a tune. The tune may help, but the heart has to move. Detailed teachings are available in the Lojong transcripts and I have taught about the seven-stage development of the bodhimind in various other teachings.<sup>496</sup>

You make a very strong request that this will become actualized. At this moment we have some hesitation, I am sure, about taking on everybody else's suffering. But this is a training of the mind; it's a way to begin. If you hesitate to take on others' sufferings, you can train your mind by taking your own future sufferings, the sufferings you will experience tomorrow, in the weeks, months, years, and lives to come. You take them now and dissolve them within your heart into the nature of reality. Then extend this to the people you really love, the ones you are willing to do anything for. Take their sufferings. This is a gentle treatment of your own habits, rather than a rough one. The surgical solution maybe not that great for some people, so you begin by taking your own future sufferings.

1. Now see all sufferings in the form of darkness at the heart of sentient beings or your own heart. You draw that darkness to you and breathe it in as dark air. **You sort of surgically remove all sufferings.**

At your heart, the queen-bee is a little candle burning. The dark air blows over the queen-bee and destroys it, poof... gone! The candle's been blown out. And all these sentient beings, since you have sucked out both negative causes and results, are free of suffering.

Then on top of that, you give in the form of beautiful white light your virtues, your good deeds and their results, your joy, your bliss, your wisdom. And you yourself or all of them are filled up by that light, and become very joyful.

(Using the breath will give some stability, because you have something to count, but if you don't use it, it doesn't matter.)

2. You meditate that light and liquid come from the lama and the Supreme Field of Merit, and you also visualize that, as taught in the *tong len*, all the suffering of others [or your own future sufferings] come to yourself in the form of thunder and lightning, destroying the Rocky Mountain of your ego at your heart completely.

3. The sufferings are also coming in the form of undesirable insects and snakes, spiders and scorpions, *etc*, so that the ego gets completely poisoned, killed and destroyed.

I don't want to give you too much detail. This is short and precise and will be very helpful. When you visit the sick, you can do this. And those of you who are healers, whether physical healers or mantra healers or mind healers, if you do that visualization a couple of times, making a request to Lama Tubwang Dorjechang that it will actualize, the healing work you do will have a different result.

<sup>496</sup> Gehlek Rimpoche, *Lam Rim Teachings*; Gehlek Rimpoche, *Vajra Yogini Teachings*.

*A Short Tong Len Practice not in the context of the Lama Chöpa*

If you do *tong len* by itself, start at least by taking refuge and generating bodhimind. It is suitable to say:

*I take refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha until I obtain enlightenment.  
By practicing generosity and the other perfections  
May I be able to obtain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.*

Then you say:

By the power of aspiration, by the power of all enlightened beings and by the power of the truth,  
may whatever things I think be actualized effortlessly now.

Now think that everything becomes void, including yourself. Then from that emptiness you rise in the physical form of Yamantaka, or Guhyasamaja, or Heruka, or Vajrayogini, or Tara, or any yidam.

In that physical form you take refuge and generate bodhimind once again:

*I take refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha until I obtain enlightenment.  
By practicing generosity and the other perfections  
May I be able to obtain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.*

Then say the following verse and use the visualisation,

*Therefore, supremely compassionate Lama,  
Inspire me to take the bad deeds, imprints and sufferings  
Of all beings to ripen upon me right now,  
And to give to them my happiness and virtue  
So that all beings may be happy. (3x)*

Right in front of me are all mother sentient beings with their countless sufferings. The space filled up with them.

1. With the powerful concentration built up so far by the power by meditating, I collect all their sufferings in the form of a huge black cloud from their right nostrils and that enters me via my left nostril. It collect that powerfully from every being without leaving something out. That huge dark cloud goes via my left nostril all the way to my heart level, where I have the self-cherishing ego in the form of a collection of dust. When it hits that point it looks like a huge bucket of water is thrown over that collection of dust and it is washed away. That is how you collect the suffering of all mother beings, while breathing in.

Then in the form of beautiful white light going out through my right nostril I give my precious human body to fulfill whatever need they have: spiritual development, food, clothes, shelter, mundane and supreme needs. My body transforms and becomes wishfulfilling soothing white light that hits them and solves all their physical, emotional and spiritual difficulties. They become perfect. These two go with the first round of saying this verse.

2. Now I collect the causes of all undesirable things from all beings' right nostril and take them in via my left nostril. I take in the causes of suffering, the karmic cause and especially the delusion cause. The moment that enters into me, it becomes like thunder and lightning and it hits my ego that sits like a rock at my heart level. Like hit by a bomb, my ego falls into pieces, so much so that the pieces themselves are unable to trace; they have disappeared into non-existence.

Then in the form of beautiful white light, I give my wealth, the result of my practice of generosity done throughout my life. It becomes whatever they need: a house, being well-equipped, and being well-supported. They enjoy the sky treasure of inexhaustible wealth.

3. Now I collect what is left to collect: the imprints of the delusions. I take them from their right nostril entering through my left nostril. The moment that enters in, it become horrifying insects, snakes, spiders, scorpions and wild crazy cemetery animals that get to my heart level and poison, kill and eat up all ego and self-cherishing.

Then I give them my virtue: my qualities of learning, analyzing and meditating, my development on the three baskets as well as all my virtues of the three times. In the form of beautiful white light it comes out of my right nostril, enters all beings via the left nostril of and develops within them the path, from guru devotion up to enlightenment.

According to the Lojong teachings, you give and take in turn, alternately, and mount this on the breath. Let the giver give on the horse, let the receiver receive on the horse. Tibetans ride a horse in the mountains, and here I need my horse. What is name of my horse? Energy or air. And who is me? My consciousness. And how am I going to ride? My consciousness travels along with my energy. Can I perceive my energy? No, it has neither color, smell, nor tangibility. However I have an example I can use. What is it? The air that I breathe in and out. My energy functions in this way; so let the breath represent my horse and my consciousness represent me. I want to give and take whatever I like to on the basis of the movement of my breath, my messenger, my horse, my communication to the outside.

Of course, when you dissolve the darkness onto the ‘queen bee’, you send the ‘queen bee’ into emptiness, put the ‘queen bee’ to sleep in the nature of reality. If you really understand this, you are doing yourself a great favor. You are not taking anybody else’s anything, but you are putting your ‘queen bee’ to sleep.

When you first begin to do this practice deeply, don’t try to help too many people, just have a single person in mind. This could be someone you have fallen in love with and are prepared to die for, or your own child you would give the world for, or any person you are completely dedicated to. Choose one person as example and see that one sitting face to face with you; then you breathe out all your positive virtuous karma, all your love, along with your breath through your right nostril, and give it all to benefit that person. That is the practice of love. Then, through your left nostril, take in all that person’s negativity (this is the practice of compassion) and let it hit this culprit of ego on the head, this big boss deep down inside that is trying to cause you trouble all the time. That’s exactly what you do, hit it on the head, destroy it, let it suffer.

Then gradually, over time, you expand your practice until finally you can take in all the sufferings and problems of all beings everywhere. A lot of people worry about this. People ask me, “When I take those sufferings, won’t I have the problems, won’t I have those nasty experiences?” That is ego’s message, again. When people ask me individually, I simply have to say, “Dissolve it into the nature of emptiness,” or, “Take it but it doesn’t get to you.” I have to give some funny, artificial, sweet talk, sort of a brush-off. But in reality, you really have to take it in; not for you, but for that thing called ego, your enemy, the culprit, the devil inside. Hit that one on the head, let it die, let it get destroyed. And no one should shed even a crocodile tear over that.

### **Other Points of Mind Training**

Three more points on Lojong:

1. Taking the obstacles as the path, or accepting obstacles and so mentally transforming them into the path.
2. Lifelong practice and its sign of development.
3. Actually transforming the obstacles into the path.

### **Mentally Transforming Obstacles into the Path**

*Nö chü dih pei dre bü yong gang te  
mi dhö duk ngel char tar bap gyur kyang  
lay ngan dre bü zay pei gyur thong nay  
kyen ngen lam du long par jin gyi lop.*

- st. 62. **Even if the world and its beings  
Filled with the results of negative actions,  
Pour down a rain of unwanted suffering,  
Inspire me to take these miserable conditions as a path,  
Knowing that this burns away my negative karma.**

Let's say you have had the worst things imaginable happen to you, everything up in flames and all those around you dying. If that happens, if undesirable events are pouring one after another like rainfall, what can you do?

This sort of thing does happen to us. Sometimes when one thing goes wrong, everything goes wrong. Karmic consequences always come together in a package. At that point, what can you do, mentally? The best thing to do is to recognize that these events are exhausting your negative karma. We all have negative karma, so see what is happening as its ripening and exhaustion.

*Lay ngan* means negative karma; *dre bū* is result; *zay pei gyur thong ne* means seeing it as the best way to exhaust it. So, unfortunate circumstances are a cause that finishes off negative karma. I am quite sure that, when we were kicked out of Tibet, we Tibetans all thought in that way. It was a source of comfort to all the people, including His Holiness. This can be a great source of strength.

Why do we have sufferings like these? Because we have created the causes. And experiencing hardships is one of the best ways to finish that karma. How do you think about it?

May the minor sufferings I am experiencing now substitute for the sufferings of other beings, who are suffering much more intensely than I am. May this happen for all of them, for all other beings.

May my suffering now substitute for the sufferings even of those in the hell realms. May they be freed from hell because of the sufferings I now experience. May all beings who suffer from different illnesses be cured, because of this suffering I'm undergoing. I pray to the Supreme Field of Merit that this may happen.

Light and liquid comes. All obstacles in general and particularly the 'queen bee', those strong buttons that got pushed so much, all of them are washed away by the liquid and the nectar from the Supreme Field of Merit. And I become pure, all sentient beings become pure, free from suffering, free from negative emotions.

If you keep on doing this practice, you'll find you have a lot of difficulties, so, what do you do? Don't take them as disadvantages; all your difficulties are a gift from your good karma, since if you don't get them now, you are going to have a lot more problems later. Say you get a little toothache for an hour. Because of this very practice and its dedication and compassion power, that tiny little toothache can substitute for going into the hell realm for a million years. Little financial difficulties now will substitute for going into the hungry ghost realm for millions of years. So difficulties are something you have to welcome rather than be unhappy about.

That is how to take advantage of the negative, unfortunate things that happen to us. You know, the camel is a very good animal, very useful, but Tibetans completely destroyed all the camels in Tibet; you don't see them there any more. You know why? They thought they were a bad omen. So the whole camel population from Tibet moved to Mongolia. The Mongolians welcomed them and made best use of them. Later, when the Tibetans tried to get them back, there were only a very few left. That is an example of a bad thing being welcomed and used for the best, and that's how we should deal with our lives.

For practitioners at this level, any suffering, misery and pain that comes in, should come in for the destruction of our negative karma. Ram Dass is right that his stroke came as the grace of the guru. If you can read it that way it will probably purify tremendous amounts of negativities. Instead of looking from the angle of limitations that the stroke imposed on him, he looked from the angle of the advantage of cutting down the negativities.

Likewise, many practitioners who do a half-hearted practice, do get set-backs. The stock market may go down, for example. Then there is no use complaining. You lost your money anyway, whatever way you think, it does not matter. But if you can think that it happened as repayment of your karmic debts, it benefits; that is what the practice is for. That is what we pray for. Even if you get sick with a head-ache or a chronic disease, you have to think that way, except if it is just bad moods. Some people have control over their moods, many don't. For those who do have control, showing bad moods is bad. Not only are you creating more suffering for yourself, but for others around you as well. However, if it comes and you can't help it, then that's that. If you can, look at it as purifying negativities. That is what is called 'City of Liberation.' If you have some joy, it is wonderful. You think 'by the kind compassion of the guru, Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, protectors, *etc.* I have that joy.' If there is suffering, think

‘Wonderful, here is an opportunity to purify my negativities’. Sometimes I enjoy my knee pain. I know if I get some massage it will go away. But sometimes I enjoy it. It is a good opportunity. Do I want it? No. But if it comes, I take it as an opportunity. I am just telling you the way I do it myself. Do I want my diabetes? No. What do I with it? I enjoy using that as an opportunity. Sometimes I pray, ‘Through I having this diabetes may anybody else never have to experience it.’ I think like that, especially when I am injecting myself. Not every time, but sometimes it comes out that way.

You can transform any misfortune into the path. If you have lost a great friend, if you have lost your job, that is bad, no doubt. But something that needed to be lost, has been lost now. So that is over. Another thing here: Whatever the causes of these kinds of loss might have been, don’t repeat them. That is the message in there too. If you repeat the same thing you are going to get the same result again and again. The deeper cause is inside of ourselves. Until the deeper attitude inside ourselves is not changed, our addictions won’t change. If they don’t change, it will happen again, under different conditions. The results will be similar.

### **Lifelong Practice and Signs of Bodhimind Development**

*Dor na zang ngan nang wa chi shar yang  
chö kün nying po top ngei nyam len gyi  
jang chup sem nyei phel wei lam gyur te  
yee de ba zhik gom par jin gyi lop.*

- st. 63. **In short, whether conditions seem favorable or unfavorable,  
Inspire me to make a habit of happiness,  
By increasing the two types of Bodhimind  
Through the practices of the five forces, essence of all the Dharmas.**

Normally we don’t recognize the causes that bring the suffering to us. Let’s say we have a short temper and go into a temper tantrum, we won’t acknowledge that we are under that influence and even if we do, we will justify it, saying, ‘I did it because of this and that.’ There may be some truth in your argument, but temper tantrums just cause more suffering, so one should not repeat that. One should learn that and once a suffering is there one should make the best use of it and get rid of negative karma. Easy to say, difficult to do. Some people get more angry by trying to think about it. But really, the more anger is rising the more the negative addiction is entrenched deeper inside. It becomes a little stronger. The layers become thicker. If I said that to a particular individual, they would get upset. In a group it is easy, because no individual is directly addressed. I am simply talking into the air. When I am throwing these smelly words in the air, some guilty people may pick it up and acknowledge it for themselves. That is their choice. As a matter of fact it is useful, if they think with an open mind.

As a lifelong practice, what you can do? *Dor na* means conclusion, *chö kun nying po* is the essence of all the dharma; *top ngei* refers to the five powers. So, “Good or bad, whatever happens, whatever appears, whatever I may perceive, may it become the five powers within me.” These are not the same as the four powers of purification. You have to build these powers or forces within you.

#### *The Five Powers*<sup>497</sup>

1. *The power of determination or motivation.* Force number one: the power of motivation, determination, or thought, comes as a strong commitment:

From now on until I become fully enlightened, for life after life, this very life, this whole year, this whole month, this very day, this entire hour, minute, and even every second, I will not let myself be under the control of ‘queen bee’.

2. *The power of the white seed.* If you keep on reminding yourself of that commitment again and again, you get used to it. By getting used to it, its power intensifies. In order to achieve that, you practice making offerings, actually arranged and mentally created, to enlightened beings and particularly to

<sup>497</sup> Also see Gehlek Rimpoche, *Lojong, Training the Mind in Seven Points*, point 4.



Lama Tubwang Dorjechang together with his retinue. That becomes the second power, the power of the white seed [or accumulating merit].

3. *The power of familiarity*, experience, or, better, the power of intensification comes third. It is really intensifying your motivation by continuously focusing on developing bodhimind whatever you are doing. That is more than just getting used to it. 'Getting used to it' is somehow just settling and becoming comfortable. But intensifying your motivation means that it becomes much stronger.
4. *The power of the antidote*, or eradication, or repudiation. What do you eradicate? Self-cherishing and ego-grasping, the 'queen bee' and her attendants. You recognize that as your real enemy who causes all your suffering. Identifying the enemy, seeing it as the true enemy, not only gives it a warning, but also kicks it out and eradicates it completely. That is the power of destruction.
5. *The power of prayer*

May whatever positive karmic action we may take grow within us to develop bodhimind, whose essence is compassion, whose essence is altruism. So, may every positive karma of all beings everywhere develop the bodhimind within all beings and us. Where it already has developed, may it increase and become better.

Application of the five powers is a lifelong practice for those who are interested in compassion and love. A lifelong practice! By doing this, no matter whatever happens, you become and remain a very happy person.

#### *Alternative set of five powers*

There is another set of five factors I would like to talk to you about. They come up in conjunction with the above-mentioned five powers. We need these five factors as practitioners.

1. We need the powerful, comprehensive *learning*. We don't have to be scholars, but we need to know what we are doing and thinking. That is an important point.
2. Whatever we have learnt, we should be able to *analyze*.
3. Whatever conclusion we have reached from that we should be able to *meditate* on.
4. We should have the powerful force of *mindfulness* which recognizes faults.
5. We need *awareness*, [alertness, vigilance], which knows that we should not repeat faults.

*Learning.* We need the comprehensive learning. If it is simply about sitting, you can just sit there. But you have to know what to think about. If you just peel off any thoughts and keep sitting there that is fine. But it will only serve a very limited purpose. We are not stupid dummies. We have minds. The mind moves and thoughts will come up. We have to know therefore, how to analyze them and further, what to project to our thoughts, what to suggest to our mind. After all, the practice is a suggestion. We are not imposing it on our mind. It is simply a suggestion that is acceptable to our mind. You are showing your mind card after card. It is very important to remember that.

*Analyzing.* A lot of people think that practice is something you have just got to do. Yes, it is fine if you do it. But how many times do we hear, 'My practice is useless', 'My practice is not that good, it is okay, but not that good'. We hear that all the time. This is just because you have not suggested it nicely to your mind. You are supposed to sell this to your mind for your own good. Use all the sales person's techniques you know. Don't use the old used car sales techniques, which is just simply saying the prayers, whatever they are. You have to deal with yourself twenty-four hours a day. If you lie to yourself, you will have a problem. You are not only getting caught by your own mind, but you have to justify and verify everything. So all that falls under the power of analyzing. This is much more important than physical sitting. Of course that is great in itself. But rather than leaving the mind without any thoughts it is important to reach conclusions.

*Meditation.* We have an interesting thing happening in New York. We have sitting meditation, three hour sessions and whole days are coming up too. These are *nyin tun*. Soon we will have a seven-day sitting and a one-month sitting coming up. Also, along with this we are doing the so-called *vipasyana*. In other words, during the sitting sessions we are funneling through the Lamrim points, the analyzed points, for conclusion. We are sitting for three hours and instead of thinking nothing, we are getting these Lamrim points in, funneling them through. This is going to make an impact in the minds of the people. This is the way we are doing *vipasyana* which is not the same way as Sharon Salzberg and Joseph Goldstein are teaching.

*Mindfulness.* Next is the recognition of faults through mindfulness. For example a short temper may arise due to our drinking or smoking or a short temper may come up without drinking or smoking. There are a million different people and their faults come up in a million different ways and nobody else knows the other person's habit. You know very well how your own mind does it. Your mind is not a secret to you. It is not blocking you from seeing it. However, we may not like to acknowledge what is going on. We just like to deny it. You can acknowledge it for yourself, no one else.

*Awareness.* So if drinking is the cause of a short temper, be aware of that. I am not telling you not to drink. I should but I won't, because I enjoy drinking wine myself. So if you do something yourself, you can't tell others not to do it. Don't they say: Practice what you preach? That's what it is. In any case you have to be aware that you get a problem if you get drunk. If smoking grass or weed is a problem for you, be aware of that. You have to be aware under which circumstances your problems arise most. Perhaps it is when people irritate you, or when you drink or smoke or when you don't get enough sleep. People's mental and physical condition is such that it can vary completely from one person to another, really. Person A should be aware of their problem and person B should be aware of theirs. Person's A's solution may or may not work for person B and person B's solution may not work for person C. But you know what works for you. Be aware of that. Then you have to have *alertness*. Without alertness you will find yourself very often in the situation where you have to say, 'I know, but I did it again!'

These are the five forces for your daily lives. They help you to handle your neuroses, negativities, *etc.*

Audience: Can you differentiate a little more between mindfulness and alertness?

Rinpoche: Mindfulness is more just watching and checking whereas alertness makes you realize that you should not do it. It lets you know whether you are doing the right thing. Mindfulness is when you know it but cannot necessarily control it. There is only a very slight difference. You can get into the same old situation even with mindfulness present, if alertness is lacking.

Audience: Perhaps we should call the last one of these powers 'vigilance' rather than alertness. Vigilance is watching out for a particular thing and then you can avoid doing that.

Rinpoche: That word is fine with me too. Lets put everybody on vigilante duties!

Because of these five powers I should habitually be able to take whatever may happen to me, good or bad. Whatever the conditions are, I will put myself in the practice of these five forces and because of that, whatever good or bad comes from outside, it will not disturb the peace within me. I will always remain in a peaceful and joyful mood.

May be blessed to be able to do this. I'm determined to do this, I'm going to stick to it, no matter whoever may say or think whatever.

That's how you keep yourself happy.

In short, all the practices here in Lojong are used to destroy the ego. This is a lifelong practice, whatever the conditions may be, good or bad, enjoyable or miserable. Whether you are high and happy, mixing with society, or low, sitting off in a corner somewhere with a long face, this practice is something you can use throughout your life, in every circumstance. So there is no reason not to be happy, there is nothing to feel bad about if you realize that everything that happens, even things that seem to be bad, are great things, able to purify all your negativities. If your car is smashed, it is bad, but, "It is great that nothing has happened to me, I am still alive." If you are wounded, "I am a wounded, okay, but nobody put salt on my wounds." That is how you deal with everything. It is very hard for beginners to do this, but if you go on doing it, it becomes very easy. You know, those great Bodhisattvas who give their life for the benefit of others, it is said that they are happy and full of joy to give their life. When you get used to it, that's what happens. Once you are trained, it's very easy to do it.

### **Sign of Development**

If no matter what happens, you are a happy person, it signals the development of this very practice of *tong len* and this very practice of bodhimind within you. This is the sign: you become happier and happier and better and better. If you encounter the zigzags, the ups and downs we always have, it is just the

struggle people have to go through. You have got to go through it. You will make it, you pray for it, we all pray for it. You have the force within you, next to you, behind you, everywhere. You are lifted, you are coated, you are shielded. You will make it. All right? That's it.

### Actually Transforming Obstacles into the Path

*Jor wa zhi dang dhen pei thap khey kyi  
trel la gang thub gom la jor wa dang  
lo jong dham tsik lap jay nyam len gyi  
dhal jor dön chen je par jin gyi lop*

- st. 64. **Whatever happens, may I use meditation at once,  
Applying the skillful methods of the four techniques.  
Inspire me to take advantage of this fortunate life  
By practicing the commitments and precepts of training the mind.**

Encountering obstacles is a reminder for us to accumulate a bit more merit. It is also a reminder for us to purify all our obstacles. Remembering that, when you encounter obstacles, think:

Hey, I am so lucky to receive this reminder now, while I can still do something. I am not completely helpless. Since I can do something, I am happy to receive this reminder to accumulate more merit and to purify my negativities.

### Four techniques

1. Accepting obstacles as a message to attain more *accumulation of merit*
2. Accepting obstacles as a message to do more *purification*,
3. In addition, you can also give some ritual offerings, like *torma gifts for the spirits*
4. You make also *torma offerings to the protectors*. By making offerings, you ask the protectors to help, requesting them to be on vigilante duty.

Not only that, you also practice more *tong len*. This verse also reminds you to keep the commitments of this practice: Lojong *dam tsik* refers to the eighteen Lojong commitments, *lap chei* to the twenty-two different Lojong advices. Normally these are given during separate teachings on Lojong. Books about this are available in English, so that will do for now.<sup>498</sup>

When I have difficulties, instead of just sitting and crying, let me take them as a reminder for purification.

How you do it? Now that you know Lojong and *tong len*, you are no longer helpless. If it's bad, make the best out of the bad. If it's good, rejoice at your good deeds. So it serves the best purpose all the time, by reminding you to do more purification, more accumulation of merit.

You know why? We only have those difficulties because we have not yet done enough. However, at the same time, you have to think that those difficulties are substituting for a tremendous length of suffering that we would have had to go through. In Buddha's life story it is said that even just a stubborn headache that won't go away for half a day can substitute for a whole life in the hell realms. This practice has that sort of capacity. You make the best use of any problems that come up, by taking advantage of them. That is how you make your life worthwhile.

### Alternative set of four techniques:

1. Let's say you are practicing something and you are finding it useful. You will *like* it. The combination of finding it useful and liking it can develop some kind of respect. Again, you will be

<sup>498</sup> First of all, Gehlek Rimpoche, *Lojong: Training of the Mind in Seven Points* Gehlek Rimpoche, *Lojong: Training of the Mind in Eight Verses* and Gehlek Rimpoche, *Lam Rim Teachings*. Further literature: Geshe Rabten and Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, *Advice from a Spiritual Friend*. First Dalai Lama, *Training the mind in the great way*. Regine Leisner, *Das denken umwandeln*. Chögyam Trungpa, *Training the Mind and Cultivating Loving Kindness*; Pema Chödrön, *Start Where You Are*. Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Universal Compassion*. For more lojong-commentaries on different lojong root texts, see Gehlek Rimpoche, *Lojong – Training of the Mind in Seven Points*.

more happy to do it. You don't have to force yourself to do the practice but you will do it easily and happily. Maybe it is even joy. That is one point.

2. Secondly, because of your liking it you develop some *enthusiasm*.
3. That enthusiasm should also be *free of the problems of meditative focus*. If you focus too much you lose your meditative attention and if you focus too little, you will have the problem of sinking mind.
4. Because of that you will have again more *joy* in your practice. You will not do your practice like a dead tired over-loaded donkey struggling uphill in the Himalayas. It will be a free flow.

When I talk about practice, I don't mean just saying your sadhanas, but working with all your problems. The trick is not to overdo it. While you are still enjoying it and while you can see its effects, stop doing it. Then you will want to go back there. It is like when you are getting disturbed reading something very interesting. You may out of politeness leave it aside, but in your mind you will always want to go back to it, whether it is Harry Potter or whatever. If you work too hard, trying to get to the bottom of the thing, you will never get there. When you feel it is working, apply it a little bit and then change, go somewhere else. Go and watch the news, see what Mr. Bush is doing or whether Ashcroft is going to be confirmed as Attorney General. I was watching C-Span this morning and a lot of people called in, saying, 'If you, the Senators, confirm him we Democrats are not going to participate in the next election. We are not going to help with the next election. Count us out.' Anyway, watch something like that for a while and then you will like to get back to your Harry Potter.

That is how we make our life purposeful and useful, not wasting our time. If you feel that you are wasting your life, apply these four techniques, the official four techniques described first as well as the second set, the unofficial ones.

Then of course, you should also apply the eighteen commitments of the Lojong and so on.

### **Actual form of Development of Bodhimind**

Under the Mahayana heading we had two outline divisions: how to develop bodhimind and after developing the bodhimind, the responsibilities that follow. How to develop bodhimind had two parts: causal development and actual development. Now we are on the actual development, which has two parts: developing bodhimind in prayer or wishing form and developing bodhimind in action form.

### **Wishing Form of Spirit of Enlightenment**

*Tong len lung la kyön pei trül dheik chan  
jam dang nying je lhak pai sam pa yi  
dro nam si tso che lay dröl wei chir  
jang chup sem nyee jong par jin gyi lop.*

- st. 65. **'Give and Take' mounted on the breath is the magic device  
Bringing love, compassion and the special mind.  
To save all beings from this world's great ocean,  
Please bless me to awaken true Bodhimind.**

(Rinpoche, while reading the verse, reads the third line as *to save all beings from the world's greatest disaster*). In a way, it could really be a disaster. It is such a wonderful life, such a wonderful opportunity. The methods and paths are available, the companions are available, we have telephones, transcripts and all of those, and if you can't make use of that, it is the world greatest disaster.

*Tong len* is *give and take* (as we discussed earlier) and *lung la kyön* means attached to or mounted on the air, *mounted on the breath* coming in and going out. It is recommended to practice giving and taking with the breath, not only to have something to count, but because mind and energy function together, as you will see if you look deeply into Vajrayana. Mind and energy have a special relationship. Sometimes the energy or air is referred to the horse and the mind as the horseman. Mind and the energy that we breathe in and out function together and that's why when we first learn to meditate, we are told to focus on the breath or air. Actually it is very easy to follow the breath, because our mind and the air we breathe in and out go together. If breathing stops, our minds cannot function. Very simple. This close link, the

‘togetherness’, of the breath and the mind, is the reason you let the *tong len* ride the horse of air. Air or energy runs through your channels, even at the nostril level. How to mount on the breath is almost like before, but here there’s a special emphasis on it.

When you breathe out, the outgoing air comes out of the right nostril, you visualize it in the form of white light. In reality it is your positive karma, your virtue and your joy given to all sentient beings, wishing them to be happy. That is the emphasis on love.

When you breathe in, the air comes in through your left nostril and you take in the sufferings of the lower realms, of the human realm, of all different realms as well as the causes of the suffering, all of them in the form of fearful dark light. Breathe it in. This is the compassion.

Then when you breathe out again, you send from yourself to them all that’s positive.

You do it imaginatively. It is not necessary to close the other nostril; if it is not so easy you can do that, but it is not needed. Whichever way the air is going in or out, doesn’t matter so much, but what counts is that all outgoings are love and all incomings are compassion. That brings to yourself *love, compassion and the special mind*. All that is imagination; it is imaginatively done.

And when you wake up out of that meditation, you say, “Not only I visualized and imagined it, but I’m definitely going to do it! That’s my job and I’m going to take it and I’m responsible. That part is called *special mind*.”

*Trül dheik chen* refers to a sort of big mechanical system. What does that mean? Whether you do the seven stages or the exchange stages or the eleven stages of bodhimind development, once you have the beginning, one step starts pushing the other almost automatically, and you get it done, right through to the end. The difficulties always are at the beginning.

Why they give you the idea of a mechanical system? It stems from old Tibetan technology. You know what they do? Sometimes a house sinks down, a multistory house like the Potala. I heard a story in my childhood about how, during the Thirteenth Dalai Lama’s period, I think, the front portion of Potala started sinking badly. Then they used the old Tibetan system, which Supa did in my house one day; they jacked it up from the center. That’s exactly what they did. One guy had to cross the river and to look from a distance to see where the major weight was. He studied it very carefully and came back and lifted up one pillar only. By lifting one pillar, the whole Potala, which was sinking, was lifted up – a thirteen or fourteen story building! Just putting a little bit of wood in there at the right place raised the whole thing. That was the example. That is why they call it ‘mechanical’. When you lift the main weight by a pillar, that same force will lift the other floors up. In a similar fashion, the difficult point here is the first step. Once you have that one, the recognition of all beings as mother-beings, the rest goes up. By using the give and take technique riding on the air, your practice is lifted up: when you recognize all beings as near and dear, naturally love, *jam pa*, is developed, which is naturally followed by compassion, *nying je*, and *lhak pei sam pa*, the special mind which says, “I will take responsibility of rescuing all beings from samsara’s ocean, and I’m going to do it myself, whatever it takes.”

The last line: I pray that I may receive the bodhimind, *chang chup sem*. So, that is the wishing or prayer form.

For what purpose do I use this laser-powered technique of giving and taking? The purpose is to cut us free, me and the people that I care about. In order to free us all from samsara, I need this laser-technique practice. I need it in order to develop love and compassion, love and compassion with real feeling, with an object, with a purpose. Then gradually ultimate love and ultimate compassion, which is unconditioned and unlimited, will develop.

That is bodhimind, both relative and absolute. Relative bodhimind functions mechanically or electronically; absolute bodhimind functions like a laser-beam, because of emptiness, because of wisdom. That’s what it is.

#### *Development of Bodhimind through the eleven-stage technique*

*Great compassion.* Compassion is actually the root of the bodhimind. Bodhimind itself is a two-pronged mind. It is the seeking total enlightenment, yet it is totally dedicated, totally altruistic. You only want to attain enlightenment because there is the urgent need to fulfill your commitment of helping sentient

beings. This mind is the special mind, or mind of altruistic commitment. Because of that there is the need to become enlightened. Just in order to be free from samsara and from neuroses you don't have to have buddhahood at all. There is no reason why you have to become a Buddha in order to liberate yourself. It has only become necessary because you need the ultimate, unlimited capability to effortlessly help all beings. The special mind makes you commit yourself to the benefit of all beings. This will require you to become a Buddha, because everything else is limited. Actually, although I am not supposed to say it, even Buddhas do have limitations: unless and until we are open for it, they can do nothing, even though they always want to.

The actual root of the bodhimind is therefore compassion and in particular great compassion.

Rinpoche: What is the difference between compassion and great compassion?

Audience: Great compassion is when you are not happy and you can't rest until all sentient beings have achieved the ultimate enlightenment.

Rinpoche: I don't know whether you rest or not. That is not the issue. You have sort of said it. The difference is the strength of the compassion itself, and the objects of that compassion. Simple compassion could focus on just one or some persons, but great compassion has to be focusing on all sentient beings, without leaving out a single one. You may have heard from me that you build your compassion on the basis of the people that you know and deal with rather than thinking about an abstract mass of all sentient beings that appear to you like a number of dots. That is true. In order to develop compassion you have to connect with individuals who have a name, a face and everything, rather than nameless, faceless dots. However, the great compassion, which is developed way after the ordinary compassion, needs to have all sentient as its object. The purpose of the great compassion also has to be: working for the benefit of all of them.

How does one develop this particular great compassion? It is based on great love. Buddha has given two different systems in order to develop this. One is when you recognize all sentient beings as mother beings, remember their kindness, commit to repay that kindness and then you develop love to all beings, *i.e.* great love. This is normally known as the *seven-stage development*.

On top of that you have the *exchange stage development*. Here you recognize the faults of self-cherishing, the benefit of cherishing other beings. You see that you and others are equal and decide to exchange your concern for yourself for the concerns of others. You recognize that if you exchange it, you will get benefits and if you don't, you get disadvantages. To develop bodhimind through the exchange system is easy for some people. Without much effort they can just think about it and go ahead with it. But to some people not only is it not easy, but it can be a little dangerous. To avoid that you can begin with developing equanimity, thinking that there is no value, no purpose in projecting people to be near or distant, in treating people with aversion or closeness. There is no good reason for it. It is wrong.

*The eleven stages.* So the first thing you work on is *equanimity*, then (2) *recognize all beings as mother beings*, (3) *recognize their kindness* and (4) develop the wish to *repay their kindness* through which you develop love. (5) Then, in addition to that you focus on the fact that *I and others are equal*, from their point of view, from my point of view, from every point of view.

We have one bad addiction deeply within ourselves. Sometimes we see that certain people are suffering and we enjoy that. When we see people that we don't like having fun, we feel dislike. If we look within ourselves, more or less everybody will have that. We love to see the person we don't like to lose. We love to see the person we like to gain. We become unhappy when we see the person whom we want to lose, achieve some gains. When they do lose we feel happy. This is a bad addiction. Here we need the understanding that there is no difference between Bush and Gore! We can easily justify our unbalanced view by saying that we are for liberal compassion, not conservative compassion. Conservative compassion is conservative on compassion. Anyway, this example may not be the right one, but think in general terms about enemies and friends. We like our real enemies to lose and our real friends to win. We don't see them as equal. If we do see a difference between them based on their commitment, their principles, based on the need of the people, then there are a lot of valid reasons to differentiate. So Bush and Gore may not be a good example in this sense. But if you look at Bush and want him to win because he is a Republican and Gore to lose because he is a Democrat or vice versa then

that is different. Then that is the mind of unequal-ness, based on the projection of enemy and friend. This is the reality in our mind, no matter how much we deny it.

Now, on top of that (6) we begin to see the *faults of the self cherishing* deeper inside of ourselves. We begin to recognize that this perception is our real enemy, because it has tortured us ever since we exist, even today. Look deep inside and recognize the real enemy. See how beneficial it would be if we could switch that, or at least if we could think that others are equally important to ourselves. [We start to (7) see the *benefits of cherishing other beings*.] The others have been very kind to us. Actually they have provided the basis of our whole existence, our life. They also provide the basis for our compassion. Without others' suffering, what compassion can you get? People therefore are providing the basis for developing the bodhimind and the basis for us to become enlightened. They have been a great help for us in everything. We begin to see them as our most precious friends, equal to gurus, equal to yidams. We should be able to perceive this. They are very important to us, more than our own life. They are actually more than equally important, they are more important. They are equal to Guru, Buddha and yidams. Look at the tsoh offering. We make offerings to all of them, including all sentient beings. Why do we offer to all sentient beings? This is the reason [for (8) *exchange of self and others*].

During the *Lojong* teaching in New York<sup>499</sup> I mentioned several layers of equanimity. Here also, there is a big difference between the equanimity at the beginning of the seven-stage development and that [equality] at this level of the exchange-stage development. At the beginning of the seven-stage development you see them as just being equal. Here there is more commitment. It is already almost the same as bodhimind. Not quite, there is still a big difference. Yet, to have a commitment to all sentient beings is very powerful. That's why (9) the *compassion* here is even much stronger than during the seven-stage development, although both are great compassion. It is stronger here because the stimulation, the push, the urgency, is much stronger here in regards to the equanimity as well as *love*. [both developed together by means of *tong len*]. Because of that, (10) the *special mind*, the next step, is also more powerful. You have no hesitation whatsoever to engage in the activities of the Bodhisattvas. Following the seven-stage system, you may or may not have some hesitation.

*Story of Buddha feeding the tigress.* There is an example of that difference from the Buddha's life stories. There is that story when he fed his own blood to a tiger family. During that episode there were actually two people involved. Buddha was accompanied by the Buddha of Love, Maitreya Buddha. They were together in that previous life. Buddha was known as Great Brahma. They both went together in that forest and both saw that tiger family having great difficulties. They were both very committed, great Bodhisattvas. But their actions were different. Maitreya Buddha's reaction was to straight away run off and try to find some fresh meat for the tigers. He was trying to find something for those tigers to eat, short of killing another animal, or course. Great Brahma, however, immediately decided to give his own body and started to cut his wrist to let the tigers lick. The difference in the strength of their actions came from the difference in the strength of their compassion, their love, their commitment.

*Example of the mother.* It is similar when you see a child suffer. We will all go and help and do whatever we can. But when the mother of that child comes in, you will see a total difference. That is because her love is much stronger. Because of that her compassion is much stronger. In the context of great compassion, the realization of equality is even stronger. That is how, as a result, you see different actions. These are good examples.

The earlier Kadampa lamas used to say that this device is worth more than a hundred thousand gold coins. You can see the different levels of love, compassion and commitment. That's why we want to become Buddhas as soon as possible. We would like to develop ourselves as much as possible. It is therefore necessary for us not only to have great compassion, but a powerful great compassion, a powerful love, a powerful great commitment. In order to do that it is important to think about the faults of self-cherishing, understand, analyze them, pass a resolution and hold on to that. We have to do the same process with thinking about the benefits of cherishing others. It is necessary to switch that place in our deep hearts. We *can* switch and we *should* switch. That should become the essence of our practice, in thought and in action.

<sup>499</sup> And Nijmegen. Both teachings combined in Gehlek Rimpoche, *Lojong: Training of the Mind in Seven Points*

When we have thought this through, the verse 61 *dey na je tsun lama thuh je chen* – *Therefore, supremely compassionate lama* and verse 65 about the *tong len* will be more powerful.

*Tong len.* A lot of people think that *tong len* refers to just giving and taking, thinking that one takes other's sufferings and gives them one's virtues. That alone is not *tong len*. Its real essence is the practices and exercises that try to develop that great powerful compassion and love and special, committed mind. You try to bring these three together on the level of one individual by giving and taking. It is not simply a visualization of giving your good fortune to others and they all become happy, and taking all their sufferings. That may be *tong len* but it is not complete, unless you bring in the power of love, compassion, and the special commitment. This power must be based on understanding the faults of self-cherishing and the benefits of cherishing others. You can and should compare the example of the wise Buddhas and the naïve persons like ourselves. All of these thoughts mounted together on the breath will bring the results. The people that I care for and love, who are part of my heart, are lacking in joy. They are suffering with pain. Therefore I would really like to remove their suffering and bring the ultimate joy to them. This will be great love rather than ordinary love. The compassion based on that will be great compassion rather than just simple compassion.

You have to entertain this idea very carefully and for very long periods. Think, 'Who are those people? What have they got to do with me? Why should I be concerned about them?' You really have to bring all the seven-stage development and the exchange stage development together over at this point. That becomes the *eleven-stage development*. A detailed description is available in *Liberation in the Palm of your Hand*. You have to include all these aspects and stages here. You may not be able to count them all, but you have to have the thought that:

#### *Meditation*

These are the people who are connected with me, who have been my mothers, my lovers, my companions, my spouses, who I have been depending on for my life ten times a day.

These are the people who are suffering from ignorance, from delusions, from neuroses. They literally have physical, mental and emotional sufferings. They are helpless, hopeless.

I happen to have some methods that are a little better than what they have today. If they can't depend on me, who can they depend on? These people are my mother, my guru, my yidam. How can I let them go without caring? No question, I have to bring them joy, ultimate joy.

From now on I would like to take their sufferings and the causes of their suffering from them and give them back ultimate joy.

Remember the example of the Lamrim, when you visualize your old mother standing next to a pit of fire, stumbling around blind. You are near by and how could you not go up to her and give her a hand and pull her out of that dangerous situation? You have to put yourself in that picture and intensify your feelings on that. You see, the *tong len* should not be a simple exercise of giving them happiness and taking their sufferings. That alone won't work. It should work to bring together the great compassion, great equanimity, great love and great commitment. That is how you move towards development of the bodhimind. You can move up and down between verses 61 and 65 and in between. .

#### **Actual Spirit of Enlightenment**

*Dü sum gyel wa kün gyi drö chik lam  
nam dhah gyel say dhom pe gyü dham shing  
htek chog tsül trim sum gyi nyam len la  
tsön pa lhur len jhi par jin gyi lop*

- st. 66. **Restraining the mind with Bodhisattva vows  
Is the one path traveled by Buddhas of all three times.  
Inspire me to strive sincerely to practice  
The three moral disciplines of the Mahayana.**



Now comes the action! If you are committed, don't just leave your commitment on a piece of paper or in the air, only in words. Do something! What do you do? What have all the Buddhas of the past, present and future done? Followed one path. *Dü sum* means the three times, *gyel wa* is Buddha, *drö chik lam* is the single path that they have followed, the path that made all the difference to them, which is the vows of the Bodhisattvas. *Gyel se* is children of enlightened beings, referring to Bodhisattvas. *Dhom*, short for *dhom pa*, means vow. Take the vow of a Bodhisattva and act according to the three moralities, *tsül trim sum*.

*Three moralities.* I would really like to remind you, that when I say 'morality', the fundamental basis of morality is *to be true to yourself*. That's what really is. We are not talking about sexual orientation. Mahayana morality does not go and check whether you are homosexual or heterosexual, nor does it care whether you are lesbian or heterosexual or nun or monk whatever. We are simply talking about being true to yourself. Here they specifically mention three different kinds of morality:

1. Protecting yourself from downfalls, which means you just don't want to indulge in bad things that bring bad results; that's what protecting yourself from downfalls is.
2. Having a moral commitment to help other beings, including yourself. Do not exclude yourself! Okay?
3. In order to fulfill these, you need the strong support of positive actions, so accumulate as much merit as you can.

These are the specifically identified three moralities. Whether you call them 'Mahayana moralities' or 'Bodhisattva moralities' or 'my moralities', these are basically what you simply can do and should do in everyday life. Very simple, very easy. Did I say easy? It might not be that easy, but if you start pushing yourself in this direction it becomes easier with time.

That is both receiving the bodhimind in wishing form and receiving it in action-form. The first is a strong mental wishing and the second is support by action to get the wishes fulfilled. That's how it is.

The action-oriented bodhimind can also be expressed in form of the Three Higher Trainings of the mind. The taking of vows is further protected, sustained and developed by engaging in these Three Higher Trainings. These are morality, concentration and wisdom. There are several ways of counting the three moralities.

Because of this I pray and commit myself to act as the Buddhas of past, present and future have acted, by putting the three moralities into practice. Please bless me and help me to be able to do this at all times.

### Responsibilities of the Bodhisattva: Six Perfections or Paramitas

Now for the responsibilities. Since you have committed yourself to act in this way, what are your responsibilities? I think we can simply say they are the six paramitas or the six perfections: generosity, morality, patience, enthusiasm, concentration and wisdom.

#### Generosity

*Lü dhang long chö dü sum ge tsog kyi,  
sem chen rang rang dhö pei ngö gyur te,  
chah mey tong sem pel wei men ngag gi,  
jin pei par chin dzok par jin gyi lop.*

- st. 67. **Inspire me to perfect transcendent generosity  
Through improving the mind that gives without attachment,  
Transforming my body, wealth, and good deeds from all time  
Into whatever each being desires.**

All the six paramitas have to work with the other paramitas within each of them. There has to be generosity of generosity: whatever you give it generously. Then there is the morality of generosity. These are the principles and reasons. E.g. One should not be giving something to someone that is going to hurt. Don't give a weapon to an angry person. Then there is the patience of generosity. Some people are very difficult to be given something. Whatever you give, you give nicely, don't get annoyed. No matter how difficult it

is what we want to achieve, no matter how many times, how many years it is going to take, we will have patience. Then there is the enthusiasm of generosity; when you give you give enthusiastically, not half-heartedly, not half-stingy. The concentration of generosity is that you focus, that you whole-heartedly give. Finally the wisdom of generosity, which is the discriminative wisdom of whom should you give what; not giving the wrong things at the wrong places to the wrong people. If possible you think like Chandrakirti said: ‘Who gives, whom you are giving to and what you are giving are in the nature of emptiness.’<sup>500</sup>

What are you going to give, what are you going to be generous with? You are going to be generous with your body, *lū*, your wealth, *long chö*, all your virtues, *ge tsog*, of the three times, *dü sum*. In other words, all the virtues that you have accumulated, are accumulating and will accumulate in future, as well as your body and wealth you transform to fulfill the needs of all beings. That is a big gift. You should also give whatever is needed. That is why you have Bodhisattvas manifesting as birds, bridges, water, fire, sun shine, snow and so on. You find all of that in detail in the *Bodhisattvacaryavata*.

Without any attachment I will practice the mind of generosity. Through this may I complete the path and go beyond, *par chin*. May I be able to practice generosity, *jin pe*, beyond their wishes and fulfill their needs completely.

That’s what it is. The question is how you do it. At our level, in the condition we are in right at this moment, it is almost impossible or unthinkable to give away our body, wealth and everything. We cannot do it. However, if you have very strong compassion, really strong, and provided it is not idiotic compassion, then you do have a strong force to be able to do it. I told you how the Buddha in one of his previous lives gave his body to a family of tigers. Maitreya Buddha was limited in how much he could do, so he was running round trying to get food, but Buddha Shakyamuni in the form of a Brahmin was able to give his body by cutting his wrist and letting the tiger lick his blood to gradually build up her strength so she could eat him. At this point, idiotic compassion might think, “If Buddha gave his body to a tiger family, why cannot I run round and feed the dog?”

The point here is that if the time had not been right, if Buddha had not completed the purpose of that particular life, he would not have given his life for the sake of the tiger family. The time has to be right, the conditions have to be right, everything has to be right. So when it’s right and helpful, then that’s what you should do. However, it is very hard for us to know when it is right, and, in fact, I don’t think it is ever right for us to give our life in that manner.

*Idiotic compassion.* There’s a lot of idiotic compassion around; people do funny things, without knowing what compassion really is or actually knowing what they are doing. Let’s say there is some weak person we want to help, and we straightaway jump into taking some action to try to help. It looks as if we’re going to take that responsibility. If it is an absolutely clean, clear thought, really thought over and balanced and then you take action, it’s a perfect action. Acting without thinking, jumping into action without balancing, analyzing, or anything, is idiotic compassion. If you take one more step beyond that, “I have to do it since I am committed to help. I want to make sure people see me setting this good example,” then it is not even compassion, not at all, it is queen-bee service.

So for each and every action that you do, you must always step back, sit down, think, analyze, and then jump in, rather than just jumping up without thinking. That is how you prevent yourself from indulging in idiotic compassion or, even worse than that, ego-service compassion.

The Bodhisattva action of generosity here is like that. Mostly, it is on the mental-training level. Right at this moment we are not capable of actually giving everything, so we simply do it through visualization, through wishing and praying.

#### *Visualization on the three types of generosity*

You pray: May I be able to help. I wish I could do it, I wish I could make a difference, I wish I could give my life, I wish I could give my blood, I wish I could do this, wish I could do that.

Don’t leave it just in the wishing form. Now you visualize or imagine that you transform your body and your virtue and your positive karma into something like a wish-fulfilling jewel tree.

<sup>500</sup> *Madhyamakavatara*, Ch. I, vs. 16 ‘Giving with emptiness of giver, gift and receiver is called a supramundane perfection’.

Then light radiates from that jewel tree. And everything sentient beings need is carried on the tips of those light-rays that you generate. Different people have different needs, so whatever their needs are, you give that to them. That is the first type of generosity, the *generosity of material gifts*.

That light continues to radiate from the jeweled tree and reaches beings in the lower realms, the hell realm, hungry ghost realm, and animal realm, and relieves them of the suffering of hot and cold, relieves them of the suffering of hunger, relieves them of the suffering of ignorance. That and protecting beings' lives and so forth is the *generosity of protecting from fear*, not only from fear as a feeling, but also from fear that has become actualized.

People talk about hot and cold hells. What does it mean? What is really happening is that negative actions have actually materialized. Before negative actions materialized, you are afraid it's going to happen and then the fear actually becomes reality. It is like when you visualize some positive quality and after a little while, as I said, the meditative state will become actualized. It is very similar to that. Negative karma also becomes actualized in that way. The fear has actually become real. Relieving them from that is called generosity of fearlessness.

Then you give your positive karma and you visualize that all these sentient beings receive guidance in how they can escape their suffering. This is the *generosity of Dharma*.

Giving your own spiritual developments in the form of explanation, teachings and information, is generosity of the spiritual path. Fifteen years ago, we started Jewel Heart here and all those who were there during those fifteen years got together last night. We had a nice, sumptuous dinner together. I think we take a few minutes to talk to you about how great it has been for fifteen years. It all started with a woman from Malden, who wandered in India. Actually she was a Marxist, who somehow found something very meaningful in this Tibetan Buddhism. Her Marxism was real true Marxism (not Politburo Marxism), totally dedicated to the people. From that background she found this useful and brought me here and set up Jewel Heart. With a few friends she started this and now we have a couple of hundred. Unfortunately she passed away in the nineties. So, one person can make a difference, can make a big difference for people's life. That is a good example here. All kind of work that you people are doing, is in one way your own dharma practice, in another way you are helping the present and future generation and helping yourself, and it is my job to thank you. And I urge you to continue.

Now this is very, very important. What makes generosity perfect? It's not that you are actually going to eradicate poverty, or totally eliminate suffering, or be able to give every Dharma teaching to every sentient being. That is not going to happen.

Then what does happen? Remember, this is training of your mind. You gain the strength to be generous. Your mind gets trained in such a way that you will in the future have the capacity to do that. So constantly you keep on thinking and meditating on giving these things, and, because of that, you will be developing such a capacity within you. Once you developed that capacity, then the generosity has gone beyond, has been completed.

It's not that you are going to eradicate all poverty or every suffering. Can you see it now? Do you begin to see the difference? Normally we look at it as, "If I am generous, I want to give some things so that it will make a difference to that person." Sure, why not? If you can make a difference to someone, perfectly wonderful, good. But that is not the requirement here; that's where idiotic compassion could come in. The requirement is to train your mind in generosity, to be able to do that. The teaching tells you that the mind, *sem*, of giving, *tong*, should always be there; not only be there but striving, growing stronger, trying to go beyond. That's what it is.

## Morality

*So thar jang sem sang ngag dhom pa yi  
che tsam soh gi chir yang mi tong zhing,  
ge chö dü dhang sem chen dön drup pay,  
tsül trim par chin dzok par chin jyi lop.*

- st. 68. **Inspire me to perfect transcendent moral discipline  
By keeping, even at the cost of my life,  
My self-liberation, Bodhisattva, and Vajrayana vows,  
And by collecting good deeds and helping others.**

*Morality today.* Morality is looking after your own vows and commitments. We have already talked a lot about morality, the traditional points as well as the contemporary points. We are living in today's life of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The current morality is an equally important issue as the vows. The scientific and biochemical development, including the artificial intelligence are today's moral issues. We cannot and should not be very conservative here and go back to the literal words of the Buddha and try to apply them in a narrow sense. That may not work. We need to have a workable morality. The Buddhist principle here is very important. You don't give up your moral values even for the sake of your life. That is the key point. We have talked about that in detail during the sessions on refuge. You don't give up your refuge for the sake of your life. The same applies here.

*Going beyond.* The paramitas are gone-beyonds: gone-beyond generosity, gone-beyond morality, *etc.* Going beyond means not being stuck somewhere in tiny ordinary things, no. Gone beyond means having openness, a very open mind. Going beyond means you should not be caught in tiny little things, like saying, "Oh, this is not proper, this is not appropriate. This may not be the Dharma way; this is maybe not a right thing to do." That is having a narrow mind. Do not get caught in too much righteousness, be open-minded, relaxed.

The principle is, as long as it is not a negativity, it is all right, whether you walk with one leg or two legs, naked or with pants or a skirt. Who cares? Basically you have to go, you have to walk; that is the principle. If you try to live up to a narrow-minded application of the rules, "Oh, you're supposed to wear this, you're supposed to do that," then you're tying yourself down.

When I was living in India, I noticed the Indian bureaucrats tie themselves down so much that in the end they get nothing done, everything is caught up in rules. That is how you can get stuck. Be open-minded, look at the principle, keep your eyes on your goal.

It doesn't matter how you get where you're going, whether you take route 23 east or route 66 west. It doesn't matter which way you come, by flying or driving, by train or walking, the main point is you get here. So be open-minded, liberate yourself, don't get caught in too much righteousness.

*Three moralities.* The principle is the three moralities, *tsültrim*:

1. Accumulation of positive virtues, *ge chö dü*.
2. Helping others, *sem chen dön drup pay*.
3. Keeping intact all the vows taken, and not giving them up, not even for the sake of your life.

If you are within these principles, you are fine; if you're cutting them, you are in trouble. The vows, *dhom pa*, that you have taken are the self-liberation vows, *so tar*, the Bodhisattva vows, *chang sem*, and the Vajrayana vows, *sang ngag*. Protect them, look after them, and you're okay.

## Patience

*Kham sum kye gu ma lü trö gyur te,  
she zhing tsang dru dik shing soh chö kyang,  
mi truk nö len phen pa drup je pei,  
zö pei par chin dzok par jin gyi lop.*

- st. 69. **Inspire me to perfect transcendent patience.  
Even if all the beings of the world  
Become abusive, critical, threaten, or even kill me,  
Undisturbed I will work for their benefit.**

As I have mentioned earlier, patience in this context means more than just being able to wait for a long time. That is not the Bodhisattva activity of patience. Buddha is talking about the patience that helps to get things done, not to prolong or delay doing them, whatever the work is. Patience is able to help. You know, a lot of people complain about burn-out. That is what we are talking about. Buddhas and

Bodhisattvas don't burn out. They don't become emotionally invested. They don't cry for nothing. They just don't cry simply for emotional reasons. This is the patience we are talking about. Even if one has to remain in the hell realms for hundreds of eons for the sake of one being, one should not burn out. We are not talking about a couple of months or years, but hundred of eons – remaining in the hell fire for that long and even then you don't get burnt out. This is because of the power of compassion that you gain through the exchange system.

Even if everyone becomes angry with you, hitting you, yelling at you, insulting you and throwing things at you, or threatening or even killing you, don't get upset, be patient. That's what the message is. That is the training; that is called 'going beyond' instead of hitting back or fighting back.

You know, one sort of fighting is denial. Denial is real fighting; you think you're not fighting, you think you're explaining, but actually you're denying. This is how you fight, "I'm just trying to give you an explanation!" Explaining nothing! You're fighting back, that's what it is!

Patience is the direct antidote to anger. Buddha himself said that patience is the most difficult practice. There are people who can chop their fingers off to make sacrifices, but all that is less difficult than to be patient. Cutting fingers off just takes a couple of minutes and then it is over. Patience goes on day after day, month after month, week after week, year after year. It is difficult! That's why Buddha said:

There is no difficulty like patience, there is no sacrifice like patience;  
likewise there is no negativity like anger.

Buddha is very good at always selling you a package. The positive and negative are packaged together and that makes it easy for you to see.

*Kham sum* refers to the three different realms: form, formless and desire realm; *kye gu* means all beings in these realms. Now if they *all* get angry with you...!! You know, some people really believe that happens, but that belief is again a negative result. It will absolutely never, ever be true that every sentient being is angry with you for no reason. But somehow our negative karmic result thinks, translates, projects, and perceives, "Oh everybody is against me." People very often feel that way, and that is again the effect of our delusions.

*She zhing* means they make false accusations against you; *tsang dru* means exaggerating the faults that are there, making them as large and as visible as possible; *dik shing* means threatening to kill or something; *soh chö* means actually even kill you; *kyang* is but whatever you receive, *mi truk*, don't get upset, don't lose your temper; *nö len* take the harm they are doing; *phen pa*, try to help them a little bit. That is what patience is. When you are able to do that, then you have gone beyond; the perfection, *par chin*, of patience, *zö pa*.<sup>501</sup> Our problem is, forget about the extreme situations, that when anybody even looks at us slightly differently, all our buttons get pushed so easily. That in particular shows us the stage at which we are.

## Diligence

*Sem chen re rei chir yang nar mei pei,  
may nang kel pa gya tsor nay gö kyang,  
nying je mi kyo jhang chup chog tsön pay,  
tsön drü phar chin dzok par jin gyi lop.*

- st. 70. **Inspire me to perfect transcendent joyous effort.  
By striving with tireless compassion for supreme enlightenment  
Even if I must remain for many aeons  
In the deepest hellfires for the sake of each being.**

Then comes enthusiasm. Even if you have to remain in the hell realm for the sake of each and every sentient being, not for a short period like Ra Lotsawa, but for eons upon eons, you should not be upset. Why not? Because your source of strength is compassion, *nying je*. Because of your compassion you would not feel bad. That is why compassion is a much more powerful tool than anger for fighting social injustice, etc. People working from compassion never get burnt out. People working from emotions, whether it is anger or excitement, get burnt out, even over tiny little things. People with compassion, even when

<sup>501</sup> Three forms of patience: not retaliating to harm, even welcoming sufferings, continuing Dharma practice.

they themselves burn in the hell-realms for hundreds of eons, don't get burnt. That is the indicator of enthusiasm. One can maintain such enthusiasm because of the power of compassion. Isn't that strong? Compassion really does that! So we see where a lot of our limits come from.<sup>502</sup>

## Concentration

*Jing gö nam par yeeng wei kyön pang ne  
chö kün dhen pay tong pei nay luk la  
tse chik nyam par jok pei ting dzin gyi  
sam ten phar chin dzok par jing gyi lop*

- st. 71. **Inspire me to perfect transcendent concentration  
By abandoning mental sinking, wandering and excitement,  
And meditating in single-pointed absorption  
On the true nature of reality – emptiness.**

So, concentration.<sup>503</sup> You have to look at the second Tibetan line first, which is about the actual reality of emptiness. All phenomena are empty of inherent existence, *dhen pay tong pei*, which is directly translated as 'free of true existence'; *nay luk la* means that is the reality (*nay luk* is reality; *la* is the dative locative). *Tse chik* means single-pointedly. So it says concentrate on the emptiness which is not only emptiness of self or objects, but every single phenomenon whatsoever is free of inherent existence. Concentrate on this.

How? Now back to the beginning: free from the faults of sinking, *jing*, and wandering, *gö*, concentrate on emptiness, *tong pa*, which is the nature of the reality of all existence. May I complete the perfection, *phar chin*, of concentration, *sam ten*.

This verse recommends the subject you should meditate on, emptiness. Meditate on emptiness, try to understand it, to get that clear understanding. Why? Because that is the direct opponent of ignorance. How do you do it? By being free of the faults of sinking and wandering. Gross sinking is falling asleep, while subtle sinking means you are thinking yet without concentrating. Gross wandering is that you completely forgot what you were doing, subtle wandering means you are concentrating but you are no clear focus, there is no intensity or sharpness, you concentration holds the subject weakly. Being free of these faults is called concentration, *samadhi* (Tibetan *ting dzin*).

*Wandering and sinking mind.* So, this concentration is free of the wandering and sinking mind. What are you focused on? You are not sitting there, thinking nothing. That is a misunderstanding. If certain Buddhist texts make such statements they don't mean that you should just sit there, being dull. They are telling you to sit there and think about emptiness with a mind that is free of wandering and sinking.

You know it when you meditate. The two biggest problems are wandering and sinking mind. How do you free yourself from these? If you find your mind wandering, bring it back. If you find you are sinking, wake up. That is the bottom line, that is the basic message, no matter how you may present it with flowery words. At different levels different kinds of wandering and sinking will be there. You all know that. The observing mind, free of wandering and sinking has as its object that all phenomena are free of true existence. Until you focus your single-pointed concentration on the true nature of reality you will never be able to cut the root of samsara. Therefore the fifth and the sixth paramita have to work together. As Tsongkhapa has said in his shorter Lamrim, *Lines of Experience*,

In a state of merely single-pointed meditative concentration you do not have the insight which gives you the ability to cut the root of cyclic existence. Moreover, devoid of a path of mental quiescence, discriminating awareness by itself cannot turn back the delusions, no matter how much you analyze them. Therefore, on the horse of unwavering mental quiescence, the masters have mounted discriminating awareness that is totally decisive about how things exist. Then, with the sharp weapon of the Middle Path logic, devoid of extremes, they have used wide-ranging discriminating awareness

<sup>502</sup> Diligence overcomes three kinds of laziness: discouragement, procrastination, and choosing wrong priorities.

<sup>503</sup> Literature: Gehlek Rimpoche, *GOM – a Course in Meditation*.

to analyze properly and destroy all underlying supports for their cognitions aimed at grasping for extremes. In this way they have expanded their intelligence which has realized voidness.<sup>504</sup>

‘Me’. During meditating on compassion we are putting the emphasis on self-cherishing, ignoring others, etc. During meditation on wisdom, we are emphasizing perception, projection and cognition. Although compassion is not the direct antidote of ignorance, we are looking at the same problem, one time from the front and one time from the back. Our biggest problem is deep inside of us. It is that Me that thinks, ‘I am this, I am that, I am bored, I am being ignored, I am burnt out, I am being destroyed, I have been wasted’. It is ‘I, I, I’ in different disguises. It is like in the coca cola advertisements. Whether you get classic coke or any other coke, whether it comes in cans or bottles, it is the same coca cola. Wisdom and compassion are two completely different aspects. But the bottom line is that standing between wisdom and compassion and ourselves is that big ‘Me’ down there, pretending to protect me, bringing me to the porcupine status.

We have to recognize this from all angles, from the angle of wisdom, from the angle of compassion and from the angle of concentration. Actually, concentration in this way is one method and cutting through it in the style of *Chöd* is another method. I am not saying that everybody should practice *Chöd*. The real *Chöd* consists of forcefully cutting the connection [to the ego, the big Me]. But just singing some verses and playing the damaru won’t be very effective. Just chanting: *My great Buddha who has kindly, without any hesitation given his own life and his wife and children happily to the tigers, etc.* is not going cut the ignorance at all. It is becoming a *Chöd* fashion. There are some nice tunes to sing and something else to do with the big drum and it is just a fashionable thing to do. You can chant all you like *Who wants to drink my blood, drink my blood, who wants to eat my flesh, eat my flesh, who wants to chew my bones, chew my bones*. It is all very nice, but it is not the real *Chöd*. The real cutting through is letting go of what we are really hiding deep inside of ourselves. All practices of the Lama Chöpa, from beginning to end, are actually designed to do that. In one way we are making offerings, etc, but at the same time we are asking the Supreme Field of Merit, ‘Help me to cut this ego, destroy it. Here is my enemy, I recognize you, you are the one who has been giving me suffering all these years. Now I know who you are and I am not going to let you get away with it.’

Audience: Could you say something about the antidotes to sinking and wandering?

Rinpoche: Awareness. Awareness, watching one’s mind, is the only antidote, nothing else. At the beginning level, in order to train your mind, you can appoint a small part of your mind as a ‘watcher’ within yourself. It is very difficult at first to separate this small part from the whole of our concentration, our thinking. At the very beginning, constantly watching seems like an obstacle, but in reality it is very helpful. You can even make an alarm ring every three seconds or minutes, and every time the alarm rings you remind yourself and check, “Am I watching my object of concentration or am I thinking about something else?” You can begin that way. It is a learning process. Once you learn it, you know how to put your major mind on the object and another part of the mind will automatically watch every step you take. Awareness is the real key, I believe. If you don’t have awareness, though you may be meditating, you will go ‘shopping,’ your mind will drift away. Here, I am not going to cover the nine stages of development of concentration power, each one of them being supported by the four conjunctions and the six powers.<sup>505</sup> You do have very beautiful transcript *GOM – a Course in Meditation*. That will really give you a quite good explanation of the concentration. It is a whole year of weekly teachings.<sup>506</sup>

Audience: Are you still supposed to be in deity form here?

Rinpoche: Yes, but you can forget about it for a minute. Don’t focus too much on self-generation here, but don’t forget the Supreme Field of Merit.

Audience: There seems to be a different outline from how the Lama Chöpa explains this part and how the Lamrim does.

<sup>504</sup> *Lam rim du don*; translation R. Thurman.

<sup>505</sup> The six mental powers: listening, reflection, recollection, alertness, joyful effort and familiarity. The four conjunctions or forms of attention: effortful attention, interrupted attention, uninterrupted attention and spontaneous attention. Also see Geshe Rabten, *Treasury of Dharma*, p. 107-117; Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Joyful Path of Good Fortune*, p. 517-520; Gen Lamrimpa, *Samatha Meditation*.

<sup>506</sup> Gehlek Rinpoche, *GOM – a Course in Meditation*, 2005. Weekly Thursday Classes, New York, 2004.

Rinpoche: Each teaching has its own outline. Particularly, here in the *Lama Chöpa*, the whole path is presented in a short overview form. Anyway, according to whatever system you go, in practice there should not be much difference.

The Lamrim teachings on concentration differ from those in the *Lama Chöpa*, particularly when this is combined with the *Mahamudra*. The combined *Mahamudra* and *Lama Chöpa* teaching on concentration has its own special methods. The nine stages and six powers and four conjunctions, *etc.*, are there, but the order and methods are slightly different. I may come back to that later.

### *How to Deal with Received Teachings*

As said before, you have the Supreme Field of Merit in front of you. At every single Lamrim point you recognize and think about the obstacles to that particular point, let the light and liquid from the Supreme Field of Merit clear the obstacles, then get the main essence of the point and focus on it a little bit.

If you can't do everything each day, you don't have to. You divide the points, spread them out over thirty days or so in rotation. Kyabje Song Rinpoche told me, "When you have received a teaching, think about it a little bit the first, second, and third night, and also in the morning, and if you also keep on thinking about it a little bit after that, you won't forget it. But when you take too long to start your remembering, then you forget." When you get used to it, when you say the *Lama Chöpa* regularly, you get the main points within you. I have not read this commentary for thirty years, but somehow I get the points back.

What do you do to gain development? If you have a constant practice, and you get stuck at one point, let us say taking refuge, let yourself be stuck there, for months or years if need be. It doesn't matter; you put your major focus on that point. The rest you just say or even if you don't say the rest, it doesn't matter. Let that point get grounded, and then move to the next point. This is maybe the problem when people say they don't have enough time. If you try to do everything in one day, there's no way, it's not possible. Do it point by point. You may want to remain one year on one point, three years on another point, so what?

During the winter retreat we give you a lot of teaching and information, we actually provide you with the path. Then, when you are by yourself, you think, you meditate, you practice, and that is how you make progress. Then, you come back and we connect, we see where you are, and how to move thereafter. That is our basic way of functioning, not planned, but by itself it is happening in that manner. The information you get here is the learning, it is the teaching tradition, the living tradition. That is something you can carry with you. How much you will get out of it, depends on how much you can really absorb. In the West we have a lot of scientific help, like tape recorders or video-recorders, which carry all the information, and people transcribe the teachings. So the information is there, short, sweet, and heavy-loaded information of both sutra and tantra within the framework and backbone of guru-yoga. This will really be 'a lifelong practice', as the teaching itself describes it. It simply depends on how the individual comes up and practices. There is no shortage, nothing missing from the teaching and the method point of view. It totally depends on how much you can make out of it and how much time you can put in. Whatever time we have, the young ones a little more, we can make best use of. One of the Kadampa lamas has said:

If I have a month or two to live, I will make sure that I will not go into the lower realms.

If I have a year to live, I'll make sure that I will achieve something more permanent, some kind of guarantee for joyful lives to come.

If I have more than that, I will see that I obtain ultimate achievement.<sup>507</sup>

That what it boils down to, getting the essence out of life. That has been really provided. Going through this teaching, my god, each word really gives you so much! Normally when you say your prayers you don't pay attention, but when you try to explain the words, it really makes you think. It is amazing how much information this provides in such concise words! Each single word contains a variety of meanings. It is as Allen always says, "Maximum information, minimum syllables." Can you imagine? This teaching gives you a sense of what that means.

<sup>507</sup> See Gehlek Rinpoche, *Lam Rim Teachings*, p. 182.



## Wisdom

The sixth paramita has three parts:

1. Space-like wisdom yoga.
2. Illusion-like aftermath yoga.
3. Special quality of real wisdom.

## Yoga of Space-Like Wisdom

*De nyi so sor tok pei she rap kyi  
drang pei shing jang dhe chen dang drel wa  
dhön dham nyam zhak nam kei nel jor gyi  
she rap phar chin dzok par jin gyi lop.*

- st. 72. **Inspire me to perfect transcendent wisdom  
Through practicing space yoga in equipoise on the ultimate,  
Joining the bliss of supple ecstasy  
With the insight that discriminates what is.**

*De nyi*, short for *de ko na nyi*, the first syllables of this verse, refer to ‘that itself’. This actually refers to wisdom, suchness. You get to this through the discriminating wisdom which analyzes, *so sor tok pei she rap*<sup>508</sup>. One of the points Tsongkhapa emphasizes is that analytical meditation is very important. He brings analytical meditation to the level, to the intensity, of concentrated meditation. As I quoted before, Tsongkhapa’s shorter Lamrim, says,

In a state of merely single-pointed meditative concentration, you do not have the insight which gives you the ability to cut the root of cyclic existence.

“I fail to see how the single-pointed meditation alone can cut the root of samsara,” he says. He says so because Chandragomin has stated that the quality of the Buddha differs from other teachers on this point. Other teachers put so much emphasis on the various levels of concentration, stage after stage. There are seventeen stages of concentration, reaching to the peak of samsara. But Buddha recommended that one should switch from concentration to analysis at the level of the first form realm level. This is why Tsongkhapa considered analytical meditation to be more important than concentrated meditation. In order to liberate the individual from samsara, analytical meditation is needed. In order to have high states of tranquility, you don’t need it, but if you want to cut the root of samsara you need this wisdom that comes through analysis.

Analytic wisdom actually tries to find out how one does not exist, from the point of view of inherent existence. If one just says that one does not exist, it is not enough. You have to eradicate what we think is the ‘queen bee’. In order to do that we have to find the ‘queen bee’ first. You have to find what you are holding on to. You have to find the subject which has to be eradicated, the object of negation. You have to encounter it directly. Only then you can eradicate it. That’s why analytical meditation is so important.

Audience: Does the explanation of wisdom change in the system of the six paramitas or the ten paramitas?

Rinpoche: No, it does not change. The classification of the ten paramitas is not a big deal. On top of the six paramitas you add subdivisions of the last one.<sup>509</sup> Remember, all the six paramitas have to have the qualities of each of the other paramitas, so each of them must have all six within them. That means that discriminating wisdom must be within generosity, morality, patience, enthusiasm and concentration as well. Discriminating wisdom tells you what you can and what you cannot do, even with respect to generosity. So the idiot compassion will have no room, since discriminating wisdom will eradicate it.

<sup>508</sup> *so sor rtog pa'i shes rab* - discriminating knowledge, analytic insight, discriminating transcendent knowledge.

<sup>509</sup> Paramita 7. perfection of skillful means (Skt. *Upayakausalyaparamita*), 8. perfection of the vow (Skt. *pranidhanaparamita*), 9. perfection of the powers (Skt. *Balaparamita*), 10. perfection of knowledge (Skt. *Jnanaparamita*). In: C. Huntington, *The Emptiness of Emptiness*, p. 99-104.

*Analysis and Concentration – developing shing jang*<sup>510</sup>

In the paramita of wisdom, discriminating wisdom will find out what has to be eradicated. What does ‘selflessness’ or ‘no-self’ mean? You are here. What does it mean to say “there is no nose”? I have a nose. It may only be a small one (Asian noses are smaller) but it is there. Likewise, the eyes, ears, *etc.*, are all there. But the *Heart Sutra* says that there is no eye, no ear, no nose, and so on. You have to be careful in reading the words and watch for the inherent existence. There is a real nose, tongue, ears, *etc.* You have to eradicate something, but not the object that you perceive. What must be eradicated is part of the mind which perceives the object.

You will find the object you really want to eradicate *within the perceiver*, not in the object. The object is the object as it exists in its own way. Its own way is that it exists collectively, dependently. We are only eradicating the wrong way of perceiving the object. It is the job of discriminating wisdom to find out what difference there is between the way you perceive and actual reality. What is there in actual reality and what do you perceive? When you find that difference you are quite close to finding the object that needs to be eradicated. Tsongkhapa’s main point here (which you find clearly two verses ahead<sup>511</sup>) is:

When you try to look for emptiness and when you try to look for existence,  
what you need to achieve is that existence should reflect emptiness  
and emptiness should reflect existence.  
Each one of them helps perceive the other better.

When you meditate on this, use your discriminating wisdom and try to find out what this means. By the power of the concentration which you have already developed earlier,<sup>512</sup> you attain *shing jang*, pliancy or fluency, which is divided into two, that of body and that of mind. *Shing jang* is a special feeling. This special feeling is much juicier and more blissful than that liquid business of sexual bliss.

How is it developed? This is very important. In the *Lama Chöpa* it says, ‘through discriminating wisdom’. You have to understand by reading that this is not only discriminating wisdom but that wisdom that has been stabilized. Discriminating and analyzing should also bring stability. At first, as you practice analytical meditation, you keep on discarding whatever has to be discarded. However, the analysis should also be able to bring you to the point that you want to find. That is where the stabilizing comes in. Once the discriminating, checking, discarding mind is able to focus and stay on the point it has found without putting extra efforts, just holding it, by the power of this, concentration will develop. Then you are getting somewhere. Otherwise, all we have is some semi-discriminating wisdom and we just keep on thinking and jumping around, going here and there. That’s what we call the intellectual mind. It is a rather inquisitive mind, maybe even witty. These types of mind are part of wisdom, but when you really carefully ground them and focus them on the point that has to be found, then the analysis itself should be able to provide the object of concentration.

It is almost similar to the way Dr. K<sup>513</sup> works. He investigates cultures upon cultures, until one day he finds something that works and then it is the end of the experiments; he has found the point where something works.

In our case, the analytical mind does its job and discards the wrong ideas, until it comes to the point where nothing more can be found. Then you focus on this result of your analysis. That is the real wisdom.

By doing this, you will experience the different kinds of ecstasy. First, at the physical level, you feel some kind of karmic energy flowing between skin and flesh, so that your brain has a heavy feeling, as if there was something warm and heavy on your head. Certain texts give the example of feeling a hot, heavy towel on your shaven head. In a similar way, you will feel a kind of energy that flows between skin and flesh above your brain producing a warm and heavy feeling. That will give you a kind of joy. This is not great bliss at all, not even bliss, actually, but it is semi-bliss, far better than sexual ecstasy. That is because it happens at the level of the brain, not just at the kidney and sex organ level, so the effect flows down. It is always better if something comes down from top to bottom. That is not quite true,

<sup>510</sup> Also see Gehlek Rimpoche, *Lam Rim Teachings*, vol. III.

<sup>511</sup> Verse 74.

<sup>512</sup> See verse 71.

<sup>513</sup> Tony King, P.H.D. in molecular biology.

but still when it comes down from the top, it affects every part of the body more easily. So this feeling flows down gradually throughout the body.

Since this is an unusual pleasant feeling, naturally you experience joy in your mind. Why do we run after sex all the time? It is not so much because of the physical experience, but because that experience affects the mind. We all know that, it is not a mystery. Similarly, this physical feeling will affect the mind. That's why the mind *shing jang* also develops. The body *shing jang* helps to develop the mind *shing jang*. The quality of *shing jang* is lightness, happiness, joy. Your body almost feels like a feather, very light. When you have the physical joy causing joy in the mind as well, our body and mind become eligible and fit to develop the combination of concentration and wisdom. This physical and mental joy is the condition to enable us to develop the combination of concentration and wisdom.

As long as you don't have the *shin jang*, the joy or pliancy, you don't have *zhinay*, or shamatha, yet. When you have that physical and mental happiness, that coincidence of *shin jang*, then it becomes shamatha. Shamatha alone cannot help you much. Although it can completely reduce negative emotions such as hatred or obsession, it is not capable of cutting the root of samsara. The moment you gain shamatha, Buddha recommends to bring in on that basis the vipashyana. That is looking into wisdom, is looking inside, the emptiness, also called space-yoga.

*Space yoga*. The verse talks about 'space yoga'. In other words, this particular meditative state is like space. This terminology is commonly used by all kinds of Buddhist translators in English. But what is really *nam kei nel jor*? The idea is that space itself does not block anything, it is all free. It is all empty. In a yoga like space, nothing blocks. Easy, isn't it? It also is *in equipoise on the ultimate*. The space-like yoga is focusing on the ultimate. When you put your discriminating mind to work and knock out the objects to be discarded, the objects of negation, you find open space. That's why it is called space-like meditation. That open space has been established by negating the objects to be discarded. Je Tsongkhapa says emptiness is established by negating.

Not only it is free, but its focus is not forced. It is enjoyable. This is not bliss-void, but it is joy. During the nine stages and four conjunctions of shamatha<sup>514</sup>, there is the development of a certain kind of joy, mental and physical. The example is of a hot towel on a bald guy's head. The object of that meditation in this case is wisdom, ultimate reality.

Is this space-like meditation like a fish in the water or like water poured into water? It is like water in water as well as like fish in the water. In pure water, fish can move without destroying the clarity of the water. This links with the statement that through the power of analysis the power of stability is strengthened.

To understand this space-like wisdom you not only need a lot of information, but also merit, analytical meditation and proper training. It will come. Unfortunately, this time we won't be able to talk much about Mahamudra, but next year, at least for the first three or four days we will totally focus on Mahamudra. What we have in this verse is the essence of *sutra mahamudra*.

So we pray and light and liquid comes, washed away all obstacles in general and particularly ego grasping. And we develop, finding the perfect view on the basis of meditation.

Why do I say this? Because there are again two systems, one system is establish the meditation point first, and the other is establish the emptiness first. This is the second one: establish the meditation first and from that angle you are looking for the perfect view.

### Yoga of Illusion-Like Aftermath

*Chi nang chö nam gyü mee lam dhang  
dhang wei tso nang dha zuk ji zhin du  
nang yang dhen par mey pei tsül tok ne  
gyü mei ting dzin dzok par jin gyi lop.*

- st. 73. **Inspire me to complete the perfection of illusion-like aftermath,  
Realizing that inner and outer phenomena lack true existence,  
Yet still appear, like an illusion, a dream,**

<sup>514</sup> See notes 505 and 506 on p. 296.

**Or the reflection of a moon on a clear lake.**

This is what the verse 13 *chön nam rang zhin dro ong kün drel yang*...— *in nature, phenomena are free of coming and going, yet you appear, performing deeds of perfect love and knowledge*... was about.<sup>515</sup> We talked about that in quite some detail. We also mentioned at that point the invocation of Manjushri in the Yamantaka sadhana. His nature is the nature of total reality. Such a reality has no definition of coming and going, because it is always there. We gave the example of looking into the mirror, not coming out and not going in, *etc.* You can look at external phenomena, such as a car produced by General Motors or a human being produced by his parents. Both are going to break. Both are not lasting. They are all like a magician's show. Here the term *illusion-like aftermath* is used.

*Like an illusion, a dream, or the reflection of a moon on a clear lake.* This means that after seeing the actual reality, all phenomena appear differently than they did before. When you wake up from this direct concentration on the emptiness, there after, the way we perceive the phenomena, the way we function, is shifted very much. to the individual. It is almost like looking through an X-ray machine, you see inside. You can even see each and every molecule within the existence of whatever, even walls or people. The solidness-perception has been totally destroyed – it appears like an illusion.

It is like when you observe a solar eclipse. [We cannot look directly into the sun. Therefore we hold up a piece of paper on which the sun light falls. As the moon moves past the earth, it gets in between earth and sun and its shadow moves across the piece of paper.] What we are perceiving is the shape of the moon, but we know that this moon shape is not on that piece of paper. We know it is in the sky. Like that, that is what our reality is. We can see it, but it does not truly exist.

You will see phenomena as an *illusion*, a magician's show. I don't know whether or not the magicians of today use the same tricks as the magicians of ancient India. In India, magicians used to take little pebbles or something similar as a base, and then cause the audience to perceive this as something different by using magic substances and mantras. They might just be pebbles, but the people would see them as horses, elephants, or cows, *etc.*, because of the magician's mantra power. Only those who were there at the time when the magician applied the mantra spell would see horses running about; those who came later would not see this since they didn't hear the spell. The audience will see horses and they will also think that they are real, but the magician himself knows that they are not real, even though he sees them as horses (since he also heard the spell). He sees them, but knows they are not real, only magically produced illusions. The way the magician perceives the horses and the way the audience does is different. The magician knows that they are just little white pebbles that only appear to be horses, but the people think there really are horses running around in the theater. Magician and people both see the same appearance, but the magician does not accept that what appears is real. The other people, though, believe that appearance and perception are the same. Horses appear and they perceive and believe that they are horses. Before we see emptiness, we see phenomena the same way this audience perceives a magical display. When we have seen emptiness, we will perceive the way the magician does. That is why in Vajrayana you hear that 'in appearance it is such and such and in reality it is empty'.

Another example is a *dream*. Whatever dreams you have at night, good or bad, miserable or enjoyable, seem almost real. You go through it, you feel scared, you sweat, you can wake up because of a dream. All that is because you perceive and experience the dream as real. However when you wake up you know it was a dream. You know that you have not got into trouble. Nobody chased you or stabbed you, you are not involved with anybody, or whatever. During the dream all this happened but when you wake up you don't perceive it as truly happening and you don't accept it as real. If you have good enough sense you know it was just a dream, not really true. The aftermath experience is like that. When you are in a dream, the experiences you have, good and bad, suffering and struggling, are as vivid to you as during your waking state. Although it is not real, it all seems real in the dream. When you are dreaming and you don't know you are dreaming, it is real to you, you feel you are actually going through it. We all know this. Similarly, in the illusion-like aftermath you know that everything is in reality empty in nature, however you go through real experiences of suffering and joy. For the individual, everything functions as if real through the causes of positive and negative karmic effects.

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<sup>515</sup> See page 116.

The next example given is *the reflection of a moon on a clear lake*. If the moon did not shine, there could never be a reflection. The moon has to rise, and not only does it have to rise, but also there must not be any clouds, otherwise they would cover the moon. Once the moon shines in a clear sky, you need nice clear water. If it is muddy water, maybe there is a problem. Then there has to be somebody with good eyesight who can see it. When all these conditions come together, you don't need to generate any additional efforts to get the moon to reflect in the water. Whether in a cup, a bucket, a puddle, or a lake, the reflection of the moon is there. Yet, no intelligent person will think that there is an actual moon in the cup. You see it clearly, but it is not the moon. Similarly, you see things, but in reality they are empty. When the conditions are right, they will appear. All the appearances in the external world are almost like reflections in water. We all know a reflection is not a real moon; that is what is meant by not truly existing. We do perceive things. But what we are really perceiving is a reflection, not the reality.

So we pray to be able to develop the aftermath illusion-like yoga. The aftermath is a big issue. Sometimes when you actually begin to see the ultimate reality, to adjust afterwards becomes a little problematic. You have to function like a normal human being, as though nothing has happened, yet things are a little different.

What happened to a number of people is this. When they begin to see the lack of inherent existence, they begin to ignore the [functioning of] cause and effects. And that creates a tremendous difficulty. Even though you begin to see the nature of reality, you get somehow close to it, you didn't see it thoroughly, and so you are loosing the interdependent nature of existence. And [by that] you are almost loosing total existence.

It is like somebody playing with a table: you take the legs off, throws the top out, and then say 'hey there is no table!' You did not understand the emptiness of the table, but you did lose the existence of the table. Emptiness of the table has to be found without losing the table! You have to see that it is just a collection of the parts and the process of the table and just simply the collection of those together is good enough to be a table. If it is not collected properly, say one leg is broken, then it becomes a broken table, rather than a table. So just the combination is enough to be able to label it as a table and to use it as a table. Yet there is no inherent existent table, because we made it.

This is quite an interesting point. It really shows there is not the slightest inherent existence, yet everything can function. That's why, when you are really looking for emptiness, you are not looking for empty, but you are really looking for existence and the system of *how* it exists. That's why interdependent relationship is becoming extremely important over here. And that's why Einstein's theory of relativity is very important. Because, if you don't have the point of reference, you cannot measure, you cannot think, and so you lose completely. The relative existence is dependent on the point of reference.

When emptiness and existence are complementing each other, then you begin to understand the true meaning of Nagarjuna's emptiness. This is a difficult, yet important subject. You find it in Je Tsongkhapa's *Three principles of the Path*, at the level of the third principle. But you really have to think from the angle of the theory of relativity rather than from the angle of emptiness is.

Einstein's theory of relativity and also Steven Hawkins ideas of indivisibility really contribute tremendously to see what Buddha was talking about. The Buddha kept on saying, everything is collectively coming in, no single, solid 'thing' came in. So Buddha really says there is no point of indivisibility. No matter how much you go into the subtle phenomena, you will still find that point is a collection, dividable. Buddha says that no matter how small the atoms are, its Eastside will never touch its Westside. In other words not undividable. And if you find a point that indivisible, you have found inherent existence. The scientists once came to a point where they said, hey, we found it! And they called it atom. Later they found the neutrons and so forth, it still goes more and more subtle. Buddha, two-thousand five-hundred years ago, was telling us from his understanding and experience.

### Special Quality of Real Wisdom

*Khor dei rang zhin dül tsam may pa dhang  
gyu drei ten drel lu wa may pa nyei  
phen tsün gel me drok su char wa yi  
lu drup gong dhön tok par jin gyi lop.*

st. 74. **Inspire me to understand Nagarjuna's meaning,**

**That there is no contradiction, but rather harmony  
Between the unfailing interdependence of cause and effect  
And lack of inherent existence in this world and beyond.**

In Tibetan we don't have to write 'samsara', just *khor* will do; it is short for *khorwa*. You don't have to say 'nirvana', just *dei*. When you put these together, you get *khor dei*, meaning samsara and nirvana. Tibetan uses minimum syllables for maximum message. In our translation we use *in this world and beyond*. It means the lack of inherent existence of every phenomenon, permanent or impermanent.

So samsara and nirvana both do not inherently exist. Not even a very subtle atom exists inherently, yet cause and result, dependent relationship is true, reliable, does not cheat you or let you down. In one way, in samsara and nirvana there is nothing that truly exists, not even an atom. However, the cause and result oriented dependent relationship is true. So the trick is that you have to know how the absolute and the relative don't contradict each other, but help each other. One presents the other. That is the essence of Nagarjuna's teachings.

The special quality of wisdom is that on one side you see the absolute, emptiness, and on the other hand the interdependent relationship between causes and results. They are non-contradictory. When you see this, you are getting somewhere.

Tsongkhapa has said in his *Praise of Buddha Shakyamuni for his teaching of relativity*,

The most important teacher is one who can talk about the interdependent system.  
The most important knowledge is that of the interdependent nature.  
They are like the words of the laws of existence.  
Only you, Great Buddha, has knowledge of that, nobody else.<sup>516</sup>

What is it that only the great Buddha knows? It is that there is no contradiction between the understanding of cause and effect and the lack of inherent existence. In the *Three Principles of the Path*, Tsongkhapa says,

11. Interdependent appearance - infallible.  
Emptiness - inexpressible reality.  
As long as these two seem separate,  
Buddha's insight is not understood.
12. Perceived simultaneously without alternation,  
Seeing infallible interdependence  
Destroys objective identity.  
With this, the analysis of wisdom is complete.
13. Further, appearance eliminates the extreme of existence.  
Emptiness eliminates non-existence.  
Emptiness itself is cause and effect.  
Understanding this protects from these extremes.<sup>517</sup>

So, what we perceive is the karmic relationship of cause and result, which is reliable. As long as you see this and the fact that all things are empty of inherent existence as two separate things and as contradictory, you have not understood what Buddha meant. When one day you are able to put them together, when the cause and effect relationship shows you how things do not truly exist, and when, by recognizing the absence of true existence, you see the functioning of cause and effect, you are getting the sign of completing analytic meditation.

Once you see the functioning of karmic cause and result, and if at the same time, you have destroyed the focal point of the perceiving mind [i.e. the object of negation], you have entered into the path that pleases the Buddha. That means seeing the relative existence of cause and effect and being able to destroy the object of negation by seeing the relative existence.

We usually think that appearance should destroy the 'what is not' and that the view of emptiness should destroy the 'what is'. But when you truly understand, when you really get it, then when you see

<sup>516</sup> Translation R. Thurman in *Life and Teachings of Tsongkhapa* and in *The Central Philosophy of Tibet*:  
Among teachers, the Teacher of relativity. Among wisdoms, the wisdom of relativity.

These are the imperial Victors in the world, Making you world champion of wisdom, over all.  
<sup>517</sup> Jewel-Heart translation. Commentary: Gelek Rimpoche, *The Three Principles of the Path – a Concise Commentary*, 2006.

the appearances, they destroy ‘what is’, whereas the view of emptiness destroys ‘what is not’. We talked about that in the beginning of the Lama Chöpa.<sup>518</sup> The real meaning of Nagarjuna’s message is that there never is even the slightest, single shred of inherent existence anywhere. It has never existed and will never exist. However, cause and effect will not be destroyed, but will continuously remain and function. Cause and effect will never let you down. They are always true. Whatever causes you create, you will get the results accordingly. Whatever results you are experiencing is happening, because the causes have definitely been created. That doesn’t contradict the nature of emptiness. You can never say, ‘It doesn’t matter what you do, in the end it is all zero.’ It does matter, it does make a difference. Yet it is zero, the zero which is understood through the view of ‘what is’. It is not the zero which is understood from the view of ‘what is not’. ‘Is’ is dependent, therefore you do exist.

Because it is empty, it can function. I am functioning, but only collectively, in dependence on many factors. If you investigate how you exist, you will see that you exist dependently. When you know you exist dependently, you know you don’t exist independently. So, when you look for emptiness, don’t look for a zero, look at *how* you exist: you exist dependently, which means there is no inherent existence. Not existing independently might not be the true emptiness, but it will help you to see it.

People normally don’t even perceive existence to be dependent. They just see, “I am here”; they perceive a permanent, solid thing. We also perceive in this way. If you experience a little emergency you will feel, “It is here, it is real, it is truly happening.” You have heard about lack of independent existence, but knowledge and experience are different things. I don’t think many of us actually feel things to be dependently existent. Most experience things as really real. We don’t even see beyond death; these are our limitations. I used to say:

If I exist on the relative level, it is good enough to be able to exist.  
If I function on the relative level, it is good enough to be able to function.  
If I do not exist in absolute sense, it is not good enough not to exist.<sup>519</sup>

Finally this verse exhorts us to make supplications to the Supreme Field of Merit to clearly understand what Nagarjuna’s real intention is.

There are two viewpoints on what Nagarjuna said, the *rang gyu pa* (Skt. Svatantrika Madhyamika) and the *ten gyur wa* (Skt. Prasangika Madhyamika). Thurman translates this as dogmaticist and dialecticist. These are good translations, dialecticist signifying good, discriminating wisdom, whereas the dogmaticist does not have such a good discriminating wisdom and therefore likes to go on insisting on some subtle form of inherent existence. Buddhapalita came up with the eight points of the Prasangika system. If you concentrate on those and struggle with them you will probably understand a little better. Buddhapalita interpreted Nagarjuna’s true message with its eight special qualities. They are quite complex and I can’t go through them right now. I will do that another time<sup>520</sup>. Anyway, they are called ‘extraordinary viewpoints of the Prasangika’, because they stand out against others’ viewpoints. So you pray that you will be able to develop an understanding of this:

Light and liquid come from the Supreme Field of Merit, purify all negativities in general, particularly those of ego-grasping and wash them away from your body. As usual you imagine that the realizations of this particular point have developed with you.

With that we have covered the sutra part and come to tantra.

## Tantra Method

This is divided into three categories:

<sup>518</sup> See page 17.

<sup>519</sup> Explanation by Rinpoche in a teaching on Self and selflessness: “If a person exists relatively, that is good enough to be existing. If a person functions relatively, that is good enough to be able to function. For example, you do not exist in the mirror, however you can remove your make-up by looking in the mirror, so it is good enough, it works, it serves the purpose. Similarly existing relatively is good enough to be able to exist. (...) But in absolute sense the person does not exist at all. It doesn’t matter; if you do not exist absolutely, you still exist.”

<sup>520</sup> Eight unique tenets of the Prasangika are described in Daniel Cozort, *Unique Tenets of the Middle Way Consequence School*, p. 58-60, 429-478. The same eight points are mentioned in Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Ocean of Nectar*, p. 222. Not sure whether these are the eight Rinpoche refers to. Needs a check.

1. Making oneself fit to practice.
2. Generation stage.
3. Completion stage.

### **Making Oneself Fit to Practice**

*Dhe ne dor je dzin pei de pön gyi  
drin lay gyü dhe gya tsö jing gel te  
ngö drup tsa wa dham tsik dhom pa nam  
soh le chey par dzin par jin gyi lop*

- st. 75. **Inspire me to embark on the swirling ocean of tantra  
Through the kindness of my navigator, the Vajra-holder,  
And to cherish more than my life  
My vows and commitments, roots of my attainment.**

The reason why I am reading each verse slowly is that I want to cover the *lung*, or oral transmission. You may think that I am just saying some Tibetan verses which you don't understand, but this is to fill in the oral transmission. If you miss any sessions, you miss the oral transmission.

When we get on that level, then comes the time that you yourself need to take the opportunity to reach enlightenment within this life, so it is time for vajrayana, the incomparable, wonderful thing to do. One should not look at it as heavy commitments and heavy stuff. The Vajrayana I know and I come from is the greatest opportunity, open, relaxed, beautiful and joyful. As a matter of fact vajrayana is much more relaxed than Sutrayana. Sutrayana is discipline-oriented. It says, 'You cannot have this, that is a problem, that makes you et stuck in samsara'. Vajrayana says, 'This is the path, you can have joy. How can you focus and work hard without joy?' Vajrayana gives you the opportunity to reach enlightenment within one's lifetime or at least within 16 lifetimes.

In order to be fit for generation stage practice, after developing basic Lamrim understanding, you need to complete the preliminaries and then enter into the Vajrayana.

*Jing* means center or middle. So in this verse you request the Vajrayana navigator to lead you through the middle of the Vajrayana ocean. What does that mean? The Vajrayana master should give you an initiation that includes the four initiations to develop the seeds of the four different kayas. That is the real essence of the four initiations. It is not the water you drink, nor the vase you touch, nor all the different varieties of visualizations, but the main thing is planting the seeds of the four kayas. These are the special four aspects: the Nature Kaya, *Dharmakaya*, *Sambhogakaya* and *Nirmanakaya*, which are in English the reality body, wisdom body, enjoyment body and manifestation body.

Everything up to here are preliminaries to the Vajrayana. It is the actual path in a lot of ways, but from the angle of Vajrayana, they are all preliminaries to Vajrayana. The way to enter into Vajrayana is through a proper initiation through a qualified master into a proper mandala. You can never get through the vast ocean of tantras without taking initiation. We have talked about the four initiations a number of times in a number of places.<sup>521</sup> I am not going to repeat it. The taking of a simple initiation is a simple, little thing. You might lose a bit of sleep for one evening. That's about it.

*Vows and commitments.* Then, commitment in Tibetan is *dam tsig* and vows are called *dhom pa*. The root of all attainments is to keep your commitments and vows intact. If you don't keep the vows, you don't get siddhis or attainments.

The commitments here are not the sadhanas commitments but your Vajrayana vows. As a matter of fact, it is about time for us – we may even get a little bit late – to know all these vows properly. We say that keeping the vows intact is the basis of all attainments. We have given some teachings on the Six-Session Yoga and there is some material available but I think now is a very appropriate time to learn what exactly the root vows and branch vows are, what the activities are, what the difference between male tantra vows and female tantra vows are. We should know why the first vow, not to despise the vajra

<sup>521</sup> See page 240, 242 and also Gehlek Rimpoche, *Ganden Lha Gyema*, chapter V.



master, is so important and why the seventh vow, not to lose secrecy, is so important. We should not only understand but also follow them. They are really the basis for the attainments. So we should *cherish them more than my life*, as the root text says.

What is the difference between commitments and vows? The commitments are what Buddha Vajradhara laid down as rules for Vajrayana practitioners. Not going against these rules is basically what keeping the commitments is. There is actually no black and white difference between commitments and vows, but still they come up separately very often.

Vows are as follows: our minds are such that when we are supposed to do or need to do certain things, we will not do them, but instead do what we are not supposed to. This happens all the time. Vows protect our minds from these influences; *dhom pa* literally means protecting, holding. So the vows hold you back from doing things which you are not supposed to do but like to do. We often experience this push and pull in the mind. We are supposed to do our sadhanas, but don't want to do them. Instead, we would like to play and fool around. We all have these mental obstacles constantly coming up for quite a long time. So the vows hold us back from acting contrary to our interests. When you remember your vows you think, "Oh, yes!" and correct yourself. So you seek blessings to regard these vows as more important than your life.

How you break a vows or not break a vow? That is another interesting point. If you are thinking that you will honour your commitments and you keep on thinking, "I will not do things that I'm not supposed to do, I will do things that I'm supposed to do" as long as you are keeping that I think you are maintaining the vow. But if you decided against it, you lose the vow. It is tricky. If you think, "I'm not going to do it, forget it!, that's actually breaking the vow. As long as you think, "I will do it, but I can't do it today", well... that's a little better.

Once you have obtained the initiations and you have maintained your vows properly, then even if you can't practice much, there's a sort of commitment of Buddha Vajradhara that within sixteen lifetimes you will obtain enlightenment. That's one of the Vajrayana special qualities.

Now we are supposed to go into the generation stage and completion stage. There is not much said here about the generation stage and you know it quite well already; the completion stage is quite interesting here.

## Generation Stage

*Kye shi bar dho gyel wei ku sum dhu  
gyur wei rim pa dhang pö nel jor gyi  
tha mel nang zhen dri ma kün jang te  
gang nang lha kur char war jin gyi lop.*

- st. 76. **Inspire me to practice the first stage, the simulated yoga  
That transforms birth, death and bardo  
Into the three Buddha bodies, so that when  
Ordinary perception and conception become pure,  
Whatever arises, may manifest as my Yidam.**

The most important activities of the Vajrayana are not only to eradicate all obstacles and problems, but also transform them. This is done through the practice of the development stage. In essence, our sadhanas are totally based on the development stage. That is the reason why I always recommend to do the sadhanas separately. You are dealing with different phenomena and circumstances. Apart from the beginning parts, where you take refuge, develop bodhimind, *etc.*, the essence of the sadhanas is the three-kaya practice. These are: death as Dharmakaya, bardo as Sambhogakaya and rebirth as Nirmanakaya. We take the basis of our own death, bardo and rebirth, and try to transform them into the three kayas of the enlightened beings.

A good example for this is actually falling asleep, dreaming and waking. We do that in our daily life. That should be used as an example. Taking death as Dharmakaya is equivalent to falling asleep. Then use the dream state as an example for Sambhogakaya. Waking up from the sleep can be used as example for rebirth and changing that into Nirmanakaya. Such a yoga will get rid of ordinary perception and conceptualization. In other words, normally we perceive everything as ordinary. Remember, in

Vajrayana it is not the neuroses that are our object of negation and purification, but ordinary perception and conception are.

Ultimately, we should be able to see every male as Avalokiteshvara, every female as Tara, every environment as pure land. Even the sound of the air, the movement of water, the trees, *etc.*, every sound is Dharma. That is pure perception. The pure lands consist of pure perception. In a mandala everything is pure, nothing is impure. You no longer see ordinary trees, ordinary ground, you no longer deal with toxic, contaminated water. You make the entire environment pure. In addition you perceive all the inhabitants as pure beings. That is how we are training ourselves. The ordinary perception and conception are the problem because in Vajrayana everything has to be pure. Anything impure has no place at all.

In this verse the term *dri ma* in the line *tha mel nang zhen dri ma kün jang te* indicates that not only the ordinary conception and perception themselves but even their smell - which is the literal translation - or better, their imprints, should be purified. In our translation it only says *when ordinary perception and conception become pure*. We may have to add up ‘even their imprints’ into the translation.

We may think we don’t know what is going on when we say our sadhanas or wonder what they have got to do with our lives, but the essence of any sadhana is the essence of the development stage. It tries to give you a training. We train how to transform our ordinary birth, *kye*, into the manifestation body, our ordinary death, *shi*, into the primordial Buddha mind, and our ordinary bardo into the exclusive Buddha body of the exclusive club.<sup>522</sup> *Gyel wa* means victor, is referring to Buddha. *Gyur wei* means ‘transforming it’; that is called development stage.

The thing you are changing is called ‘base’ in Vajrayana Buddhism. It is the basic material we have. Suppose you want to change an ordinary white shirt to a beautiful coral-colored one. First you need a white shirt which is the base. The process then is to add the color; that is the path. Your beautifully colored shirt is the result.

So when you change ordinary things into extraordinary things through a process, the ordinary things are the base. Without the base you can’t do anything. If you don’t have a shirt to start with you can’t change it into a differently colored one. Here the base is birth, death and bardo. These three basic stages of our lives are the base.

For a true practitioner of the development stage: (a) every being he encounters appears to him as an enlightened being, *ka na lak pu*; (b) every enlightened being encountered is in the nature of bliss, *lak pu dhe wa*; (c) every bliss also acknowledges the nature of reality, *de wa tong pa*. These are the three steps.

So, not only are you training to transform your birth, bardo and rebirth into the three bodies, *ku sum*, but also to perceive everything and everyone as pure, so that whatever you encounter is blissful with a wisdom-perceiving bliss. This process automatically leads you to the completion stage.

When all this that you are trying to visualize becomes real to you and actualizes, then you automatically move on to the next stage, the completion stage. This is unlike the process at the Lamrim level, where you have the control and can go from one point to the next and go back and forth. In Lamrim it is all right to go on if you have some degree of understanding. But in the case of shifting from development stage to completion stage, it is your experience which will move you there. When it becomes intensified and becomes reality, you are moved to the next level. It is not something you do, but your experience will push you. What is pushing you is those three things: *ka na lak pu*; *lak pu dhe wa*; *de wa tong pa*.

That is why I told you, when I was interviewing Khyentse Rinpoche in Delhi on radio he said that every male is Avalokiteshvara, every female is Tara, and every sound you hear is mantra. He kept on talking on about this without interruption for a long time. That is what this is about.

Some people may object to that as hypnosis, but it may be reality. It involves training yourself in this transformation, working every day trying to make it work and adding on more techniques here and there and getting more clues until you become what you train for. When you have achieved that you move on to the next stage. You pray that ordinary perception and conception may be purified and whatever appears may appear as pure. You pray to be blessed to see everything as pure.

This is also where the idea of Buddha showing Shariputra the pure land by putting his toe on the ground comes in. There are other similar examples, too.

<sup>522</sup> See page 132.

This is the bottom line in whatever practices you do, Yamantaka or Vajrayogini, or any other sadhana. It boils down to the three kaya practice which will purify ordinary perception, appearance, and conceptualizing. Through that, whatever you are visualizing becomes reality to you and thus becomes pure. That is the reason why in order to attain enlightenment you don't have to go somewhere; it is within you.

### Completion Stage

*Nying gei dhap gyay du ti ü dhah tu  
gön khyö zhap sen kö pa lay jhung wa  
ö sel gyü lü zung dhu juk pay lam  
tse dhir ngön du gyur war jin gyi lop.*

- st. 77. **As you place your feet, oh Glorious Protector,  
At the very center of my heart's eight petals,  
Inspire me to actualize in this very life  
The paths of clear light, illusion body, and their union.**

This gets a bit complicated. We should not go into it too much, but we need to give you the basic idea. *Nying ga* is the heart center where there are eight petals.

*Three channels.* Since you are visualizing yourself as an enlightened being you don't have to worry about all your organs and where everything is. Just think that at the center of your body you have three channels.

The central channel is called *avadhuti* [Tib. *uma*<sup>523</sup>]. At each of the two sides you have one channel, the right called *ro ma*, the left *kyang ma*.<sup>524</sup> The central channel reaches from between the eyebrows down to the private parts. It is some kind of backbone or central pillar of our psychic body, the master structure in our body. All the channels actually are energy passages. The right and left channels somehow hang on to the central channel, like vines unable to stand by themselves. They are supported by the central channel which actually stands on its own.

The central channel represents true reality and the right and left channels are dualistic minds or delusions. They are unable to stand by themselves, because they are false, but instead they rely on the central channel. With the help of the central channel, they can manage to go from the forehead down to the private parts and fill out the body. By doing that not only are they able to grow through the whole body, but they also twist around the central channel and almost kill it, at least they make it unable to function. Especially at the crown, throat and heart level, to make it simple (if you want to go more in detail, also at the navel level and almost at the level of the sex organ) they form knots. It is like some vines that grow on tree trunks and gradually wrap around them strangling and killing the main trunk (one such vine is called a strangler fig). Tree trimmers have to come and trim them off. So we should act like tree trimmers and free the central channel from being choked by the false channels of delusions or dualistic functioning.

At forehead, crown, throat, heart and navel, these channels form the knots and they also create the chakras which actually are the knots twisting round. These chakras are in this way nothing but the unwanted knots of the delusion and dualistic channels. Our goal here is to open the choked, main channel.

At your heart level, inside the heart chakra, where both the left and right channel form the knots, right inside the middle of that choking point, by visualizing you try to fit something in and push these knots out.

You are going to make Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang sit in there. It is not yet the time to completely dissolve the supreme field. Therefore you use a duplicate one. You can always multiply them, there is never a shortage.<sup>525</sup> Buddha has said that spiritual power and material power can function with equal

<sup>523</sup> central channel: *rtsa dbu ma*

<sup>524</sup> right channel: *rtsa ro ma*, left channel: *rtsa rkyang ma*

<sup>525</sup> Also see page 44 and page 241.

strength. So here, through spiritual power, you can keep on duplicating, as in the material sphere you can make photocopies and duplicate things that way. It is very similar.

Here you can use the visualization which I have taught orally<sup>526</sup> at the stage of taking the four initiations.<sup>527</sup> The process is almost the same. I am sure there is a little bit about it in transcripts from my *Ganden Lha Gyema* teachings [and in the Yamantaka teachings, last pages]. In the *Ganden Lha Gyema* there is only the additional tying up with the mantra. Then, either during this verse, or a few verses later, there should be a link to the Mahamudra practice. They should all be interlinked.

There is another message in this verse. The last three stages in Vajrayana, the clear light, illusion body and their union are the union of body and mind. When the duplicate lama dissolves into you, by simulating that, you manage to get these three last stages of the Vajrayana. That is the reason why we always say, ‘You will become enlightened in the nature of the Lama’s mind’. These are the most important points!

### *Visualization*

Inside the central channel, at the very center of the heart, you visualize an eight-petalled lotus. In the center of that lotus you visualize a small white Vajradhara with consort, sitting on a moon disc.

Now, you produce a complete duplicate set of the Supreme Field of Merit in front of you. From that duplicate field then the outermost figures start to dissolve to the center, including the five groups of lamas. Then Lama Lozang Drakpa dissolves to Tubwang, he dissolves to Buddha Vajradhara.

This very Buddha Vajradhara comes to your crown or your forehead. Since both of these are visualized as open, and since you are functioning as it is convenient, both ways are possible.

He then comes down through your central channel, comes right into your heart chakra and dissolves into the white Buddha Vajradhara whom we have meditated there earlier. He not only dissolves to him, but becomes one, inseparable.

You focus, concentrate on the Lama at your heart level.

As you focus on that process, you will always develop some kind of physical sensation and that body sensation will help you to keep focusing. And then you keep on meditating inside the heart chakra in the middle of the central channel with your focus really deep in the center of the psychic body. That Dorjechang is nothing but your own consciousness, which is nothing but Lama Dorjechang’s mind, which is nothing but your Yidam’s reality. Pointing all your focus inwards helps your inner energy or air to function. The central channel will be able to breathe. When it keeps on breathing internally, then finally the energy will enter inside the heart level within the *avadhuti*. Until we reach that level, our energies float through the right and left channels, and therefore sometimes we have sometimes stronger air flowing through the right nostril, sometimes through the left nostril, sometimes one of them is blocked and sometimes both are blocked and then you reach for your tissue paper and blow your nose!

*Airs in the central channel.* When the air **enters** the central channel, the sign of it is that the breathing power of the right and left channels will become equal. This equal flow of energy through the side channels we call in Tibetan *nyam juk*.

The second goal then is to be able to **hold** the energy inside the central channel. When you can do that the movement of the belly will stop. You don’t breathe, but you are not dying, don’t worry. It is a very similar process.

Then the next step is that the energy not only remains in the central channel, but **dissolves** into it. At that point, you experience all the signs of the dying stage, like the mirage, smoke, red sparks, the light burning, the whitish feeling, the reddish feeling, the darkness and finally, coming out of the darkness into the moon-light stage. In Tibet we call this the autumn moon. In Tibet the rains fall in summer, so all the

<sup>526</sup> Not allowed to be transcribed.

<sup>527</sup> Verses 48, 49.

dust is settled. Therefore you have clean, crystal clear fresh air. The cool, clear moon-light within such clean, fresh air, that is the example given for the base clear light.

First you have to generate this imaginatively, then you have to get used to it, then it becomes comfortable, then it becomes part of your life and finally it becomes actual for you. That's how you train. When you try to do this, you don't die, but you use these stages, while you are meditating.

*The nine mixings* [se wa gu]<sup>528</sup>

1. First you are mixing the *Dharmakaya* into this base clear light. It is called the mixing of the waking state with the *Dharmakaya*.

2. Then you begin to wake up from that concentrated absorption, of all your energy at the center of the heart level in Lama Vajradhara who is inseparable from your own consciousness-Vajradhara and your Yidam-Vajradhara. From that absorption you now begin to rise. The completely absorbed, almost dissolved energy now picks up a little movement inside the central channel. That tiny little air or energy will begin to *reverse* all the signs which you have meditated before. These signs will appear in the reverse order in perfect sequence. At the level of the mirage in the reverse order you meditate outside your body suddenly a beautiful white Buddha Vajradhara. He just pops up all of a sudden, separately from your body. This is the exclusive Buddha from the exclusive club, which in the Yamantaka practice will be Manjushri, in Vajrayogini the letter BAM.

In the development stage, this is very briefly described, it just pops up. When you are really going through it in the completion stage, you *reverse* all the signs and at the end of the smoke level you suddenly have this primordial Buddha, *Dang po gön po*, as he is called in Guhyasamaja. In Yamantaka, it is Manjushri, in Vajrayogini, the seed syllable BAM, and here in the *Lama Chöpa*, you make it the white Buddha Vajradhara. You can do it with any of them. You acknowledge that as *Sambhogakaya*. This is the mixing of the waking state with the *Sambhogakaya*.

3. Again, this Sambhogakaya absorbs through the eight signs up to the black stage and the clear light level and from that voidness you arise as Yamantaka. That is the mixing of the *Nirmanakaya* with the waking state.

If you give yourself training of these at the waking state, then the next step is to try and do it in the sleep state. There are the three mixings of the *waking state*, the three mixings of the *sleep state*, and then at actual death, the actual death, bardo and rebirth level, the mixing of the three kayas *at death*. Together this makes nine cycles of mixings. In Tibetan they are called *sa wa kor gu*. *Chi du gi sa wa sum, ni du gi sa wa sum, se du gi sa wa sum*, the three of the death, waking and sleeping states.

On top of these nine *sa was* you do the vajra recitation. The nine mixings and the vajra recitation are the causes leading you to the clear light.

*Stages.* The first clear light is the **exemplary clear light** [pei ö sel]. You always go through the same process. As I told you more than once, whatever you learn at the beginner's level of Vajrayana, you still do the same up to the final stage. It is a matter of how intensified it is and this depends on the experience of the individual. Bliss helps you to focus. That is where really the use of bliss comes in, whether it is bliss generated from sex or from inner sex, outer or inner intercourse. Once it is generated, it intensifies the process.

The same process again happens at the level of the exemplary clear light. From the absorption stage of the clear light a little air moves, which we call 'five-colored rainbow energy'. This wakes you up from the exemplary clear light. The new form that you are now taking is the **impure illusion body** [ma dag pei gyu lu], the first illusion body.

You now keep on concentrating on the impure illusion body. You practice again the dissolving system and the vajra recitation. At that point it is not so much the vase breathing. Vajra recitation does not mean saying mantras, so don't misunderstand. It is meditating sharp weapons, vajras, being sent through the central channel, up and down.

You may have noticed Ganchen Rinpoche's program which is called 'Lama Marco Polo flies through the world', in which he has vajras with wings and these link up the points on the map; they make

<sup>528</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light of Bliss*, p. 100-123.

plans for a year in advance. Here it is not winged vajras but the real indestructible light-natured vajras which are going up and down the central channel. That is called vajra recitation. It is not right for me to say much about the vajra recitation at this point, just so much that you don't get confused with the mantra saying.

Because of this practice, the illusion body will disappear like a cloud in the sky. When that disappears, you don't disappear but enter into the **absolute clear light** [*dön gyi ö sel*]

Now I will go more quickly. When you rise from the absolute clear light you get the **pure illusion body**, [*gyu lu*]. Here the illusion body differs, depending on the yidam. But even at that level you can call this union. It is the **union with learning**, [*lo pa'i sung juk*].

Then you repeat the same process including the vajra recitation and then go through the clear light again. After this, you rise in the **union of no more learning**, [*mi lo pa'i sung juk*,] the union of the space-like level and the aftermath. At this moment the space-like meditative equipoise and the illusion-like aftermath have become one. This is the ultimate union, Buddhahood, knowing everything.

*Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang*. If you practice according to Guhyasamaja you generate a Buddha Vajradhara at the heart level of Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang. If you do it according to Heruka, it will be a Heruka, in case of Yamantaka you generate a Yamantaka. The Heruka would be the one with blue body, twelve arms, four faces, with consort Vajrayogini. In case of Yamantaka it is the nine-face, thirty-four arm version.

At the *dzok rim*<sup>529</sup> level you have in the case of Guhyasamaja a white Vajradhara, for Yamantaka the yellow Manjushri and for Vajrayogini the letter BAM.

At the end of this verse you pray to be blessed to attain such a stage within this life. That is the complete path of the Vajrayana. Like the *lam rim*, you have the *nak rim*.

Audience: In many teachings it talks about mixing the child clear light and the mother clear light. What is the mother clear light?

Rinpoche: This is the general clear light, the primordial clear light.

Audience: Where and how does that exist?

Rinpoche: Everywhere.

Audience: Is this a quality of mind?

Rinpoche: Sure, it has to be.

### Forceful Transference of Consciousness or Phowa

That includes both the sutra method and the tantra method.

*Lam na ma zin chi wei dü jei na  
tsen thap tsang gya la mei pho wa ni  
top nga yang dhah jar wei dham ngag gi  
dhah pei zhing dhu drö par jin gyi lop.*

- st. 78. **If my death should come before I enter the path,  
Bless me to reach a Pure Land  
Through applying the instructions on the five powers,  
The supremely powerful method of transference to Buddhahood.**

### Sutra Method of Phowa

So far, all the trainings we have to go through have been explained. If you have tried to do all of them and yet still don't have solid attainment when death comes, you have to go. Human life is very fragile. Anything can happen. A mad dog can jump at you and bite you. That happened to me when I was in India this time, but luckily the bite did not puncture the skin. I just felt a little warmth in there. But six days later that dog died. They called me up and told me to be careful. But I think there is no need to be careful

<sup>529</sup> Completion stage level.

in this case. If you really have rabies nothing can be done. So in such a case it is important for us to know.

It is extremely difficult to tell somebody who has contracted a deadly disease that they are going to die. Particularly if the family is looking for a cure, naturally one tries to be very positive and to do everything possible. At that moment it is out of place to even say that there is the possibility of death.

So there is better opportunity to talk about this when you are well, when you don't have a fatal disease. This is the time to talk. If you get illness and see the signs of death, of course you take refuge and you do the *pho wa*.

The method that forcefully causes you to attain enlightenment is called the phowa of the Lama. There are reasons for that which we will go into later.

There are two phowas: 1) Sutra phowa without *hik* and *phat* 2) Tantra phowa with *hik* and *phat*. The first one uses the five powers at the time of death to make you go to a pure land, forcefully pushing you into another suitable life form to continue the path.

### *Training in Sutrayana Phowa - the Five Powers*<sup>530</sup>

1. *The power of the white seed.* Even in the Western tradition, people make their will before they die and leave their possessions to others. Be generous there. After you have gone, the only thing you can take with you is your open-minded generosity. Be generous to the Supreme Field of Merit, to the Sangha, to worthy causes. Of course, you also have your responsibilities to your children, your family, *etc.*, but what you really are able to carry with you is your generosity to the Supreme Field of Merit. That means that Jewel Heart will accept all endowments! That is a joke. But that way you will have no attachment, since you have purely dedicated everything to the supreme field, and you can go happily and solidly, knowing that you can cash in this positive karma in your death, bardo and future life. That is basically your insurance. First, it insures that you don't have attachment, and then, it insures you a better future life.
2. *The power of prayer.* You have to make up your mind where you want to go. There are lots of advertisements for the Western Paradise, Tushita Pure Land, the Pure Land of the Dakinis and Shambala, there are all these different pure lands with lots of brochures and information available. Read those first and make up your mind where to go. Once you have made up your mind, you keep on praying constantly to take rebirth in that land. Audience: Are you the travel agent? Rinpoche: I am authorized, or I should say I am licensed.
3. *The power of the antidote.* That is the power we talked about yesterday when we were dealing with bodhimind. We were looking at the mind of self-grasping and self-cherishing, in other words the 'queen bee', as the real enemy. This enemy harms us life after life. It has bothered us enough and after this lifetime you are no longer willing to entertain it any more. This is it. Put your foot down! Eradicate ego-grasping! That is called the power of the antidote.
4. *The Power of determination or motivation.* Over and over again, you have to make up your mind and remember that although you wish to live a long time, one day you will have to die. Be determined that, when you are dying, no matter what kinds of pain and even loss of consciousness you may have to suffer, you are going to think and act in the way you are training in now. You have to decide what your mental states will be at the time of death. So you have to draw up the plans now. Pick up your itinerary, look at it and decide that "This is what I am going to do!" You have to think again and again about what you will do at that time and prepare yourself for death. That is called the power of determination.
5. *The power of familiarity or training.* If you keep on developing and building up this mind, this intention, you get used to it, familiarized, well-trained.

You can do this training within the *Lama Chöpa*, if you have time. If not, you can just quickly take refuge, generate bodhicitta, quickly generate the Supreme Field of Merit, pray to it, and go through these

<sup>530</sup> For the five powers of life see page 281. Also see Gehlek Rinpoche, *Lam Rim Teachings*.

five steps. In that way you can keep on training yourself, whenever and wherever you can: on the toilet, in the shower, in the parking lot, in line at the grocery store.

### **Tantra Method of Phowa**

I don't know if we have time for this here. If we can't do it, Drikung Rinpoche has one of the best *phowas*. Those who have taken that, have it.

The Vajrayana *phowa* is not mentioned in this text at all. Earlier I talked about the perfect path, which is really the nine mixings, the three of the waking stage, the three of the dream stage and the three of the dying stage. When your practice of them is not solidly reliable, when you are not absolutely certain that at the actual dying stage you can do it, if you don't have complete control, then it is recommended to use the *phowa*. The right time to use it is when you get the signs of death.

Even when you know that you are going to die, you should still use methods to prolong your life, such as taking the usual medications. People sometimes go to extremes and refuse to take any medicine, but that is not right. You should take medicine and try any available treatments. Spiritually at the same time you do long-life prayers and if you cannot do them yourself you ask others to do the longevity practices through different Yidams such as White Tara or Amitayus. You should also do purification practices and you can even consult astrologers. But if, even then, nothing helps, you have to go; we all come to that point eventually, for sure. That is the time to use the *phowa*. If you use it too early, you get the downfall of killing an enlightened being. On the other hand, it is recommended to use the *phowa* before you get very severe pain, if you think you will experience that. It can be done as early as six months before death is due. I don't know if that can be done nowadays. Six months may not be appropriate.

As I told you earlier, you accumulate merit through generosity as best as possible and make offerings. You should dedicate all the positive virtues from that to all sentient beings. By doing that you build up the five powers which we have mentioned earlier. Then at the time of the death it is recommended to lie down on your right side. The left hand is stretched out on the left thigh. The legs are stretched out and the right hand should be under your right cheek. That is called the lion posture. This posture is recommended is because that is exactly how Buddha passed away. Then, finally you close all your 'doors' other than your crown. That means not letting your consciousness out of your body through any doors apart from the upper ones. That is still part of the sutra part of the *phowa*.

Marpa Lotsawa recommended not letting the consciousness out of the mouth, navel, sex organ, anus or even through the brow, ears, eyes, nose, *etc.*, and you do that by blocking these, so that the only door left is the crown. Marpa is the one who has developed certain styles of behavior like the meditation posture and as we see he even has a style of dying.

### *Training in Vajrayana Phowa*

When you have said your *Lama Chöpa* almost completely, you stop at the dissolution of the Supreme Field of Merit and assume the lion posture. During the practice itself, you should sit up, even when you get close to death, unless you are unable to. Then you visualize yourself as the Yidam. Your body is almost like a teepee, hollow inside. You don't have to worry about where the heart and intestines are, that's why you generate yourself in the form of a Yidam. At the center of the central channel you put a block below the heart level. The upper part of the central channel then becomes larger like a trumpet with the wider part facing upwards and the narrow part pointing down. At the heart level is your own consciousness in the form of Buddha Vajradhara, very, very small, the size of a half pea. Your consciousness is a feather-light light-ball. It is very, very light and it is inside your outer, light-natured body.

At this moment you close the Supreme Field of Merit. Everybody dissolves to Buddha Vajradhara, including Lama Lozang. Buddha Vajradhara comes to your head, and sits above you, facing in the same direction, ready to receive you.

At that point, you say this verse three times with the profound intention of going, completely focused on Lama Vajradhara, thinking of nothing else. Even if your head catches fire there is no reason to stop. With that sort of urgency and focus, one repeats and requests three times, building up strong profound faith.

At the second repetition of the verse, hook-like red light-natured rays come from the heart of the Lama. They reach down through the central channel, reach for your own consciousness which is in the form the feather-light Vajradhara and join with it.



At the third repetition the little Vajradhara starts flying up, there is some air underneath him, so he starts jumping and flying. At the end of the third repetition you say, “Hik!” which concentrates all your energy together. At that time you yourself in Buddha Vajradhara form fly straight up out of your body, like lightning or a shooting star. Your consciousness goes straight up into the heart of Lama Vajradhara and into the letter HUM at his heart which represents his consciousness. Normally you dissolve everything down, but this is the time to dissolve upward. Your consciousness and Lama Vajradhara’s mind become inseparable.

When you get the actual phowa teachings, you will be required to go through this practice really slowly. I am not doing that now, I am simply giving you the information. In the actual teachings you will practice building up the energies, bringing them down the central channel, holding them together and finally pushing them up.

Then you can say “Ka” or “Phat” when you want to bring your consciousness back down, either down back to the heart chakra or if you can’t then it is recommended to leave it at the throat chakra. You repeat the process of bringing the consciousness up and down and every time repeat this verse. That’s how you train in Vajrayana phowa.

When you do the training, you will get signs like a swelling at the crown, or pus or blood coming out of an opening at the crown. Once you get those signs and you are comfortable with the practice, it is not recommended to do this everyday but only occasionally. When you are well trained, once or twice a month is enough. One should not do it all the time.

Finally, in the training, you dissolve the Lama from above your crown into your heart level and become inseparable. Your consciousness is now a white or blue Vajradhara.

Actually, before dissolving the Lama, you visualize that he holds a life vase from which come light and liquid which rejuvenate your life like in the White Tara practice. You can even do the White Tara practice at that point.

That is the Vajrayana phowa, to be done if the realizations of the path are not attained. Normally the sutra phowa is more highly recommended. I know a number of people who have used the messages contained in the sutra phowa, applying the five powers. The Kadampa lamas even boasted that this is the best phowa, without using *hik* and *phat*. It is considered very important.

Here the word *la ma* has not to do with lama as teacher [as some translations use it], but it means upper – and -upper, better-and-better. This verse does not mean you are transferring your consciousness to a lama consciousness, it does not say to forcefully take you to the enlightenment level. It means forcefully bringing you, after you go, to take your rebirth in a future life which has a perfect Vajrayana practice. And through that you will be able to grow better and better.

Audience: In our translation of this verse it says, ‘*the supremely powerful method of transference to Buddhahood.*’ But isn’t it supposed to be a transference of consciousness to a pure land?

Rinpoche: Oh, that is okay, Buddhahood or Pure Land, what difference does it make?

## To Be Reborn as a Disciple

*To Be the First Disciple*

*Dhor na kye zhing kye wa tam chei du  
gön po khyö kyi drel may jei zung nay  
ku sung thug kyi sang wa kün dzin pei  
say kyi thu wor gyur war jin gyi lop.*

- st. 79. **From birth to birth, please bless me, oh Protector,  
Never to be separated from your loving care,  
And, as the foremost of your disciples,  
To hold every secret of your body, speech and mind.**

*To Be Among Principal Disciples*

*Gön khyo gang dhu ngön par sang gyay pei  
khor gyi thoh ma nyi dhu dhah gyur te  
nay kap thar thuh gö dö ma lü pa  
bey mey lüin kyi drup pei tra shi tsöl.*

- st. 80. **Grant me the good fortune to be the first in your circle  
Wherever you manifest as a Buddha,  
And to accomplish spontaneously, without effort,  
All temporal and ultimate needs and wishes.**

These two are simply praying, seeking auspiciousness. In the first of these verses you are praying to be the first or principle disciple of Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang, like Shariputra and Maudgalputra were to Buddha and in the second you ask to be in the first group of disciples when he manifests Buddhahood. You pray to be inseparable from him and to hold the secrets of his body, speech, and mind. Whenever and wherever the Lama becomes a fully enlightened Buddha, you would like to be in the first group of disciples and thus complete the temporary and long-term requirements.

Why is this auspicious? For a number of reasons. Buddha Shakyamuni is the fourth and Tsongkhapa the eleventh Buddha of this fortunate eon. Therefore, every one of us who follows the Tsongkhapa tradition, this practice, this lineage, has a great chance to be among the first disciples of that official Buddha who probably will be the only Buddha out of a thousand, besides Shakyamuni, to have the Vajrayana teaching. So even if we chose to go for lunch at the Arhat-level, even then, during that period we will come back and become fully enlightened.

## VII DISSOLVING AND CONCLUSION

### Dissolving the Supreme Field of Merit<sup>531</sup>

*Dhe tar söl wa tap pe la ma choh  
jing gyi lap shing gyei zhin chi wor jön  
lar yang nying gei pe mei zeu dru la  
zhap sen ö chah ten par zhuk su söl*

- st. 81.     **Pleased by these requests, Oh Supreme Lama,  
To bless me, come to my crown with delight,  
And once again set your radiant feet  
Firmly at the center of the lotus of my heart.**

In India, when there is a blackout, just before the electricity goes out, the lights get brighter for just a moment, maybe for a second. Likewise here.

#### *Visualization*

Before you dissolve the Supreme Field of Merit, you should once again look more closely at it. Everything is very bright, Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang, the Yidams, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, Dakas, Dakinis, Arhats and Dharma Protectors. Look at them once again, acknowledge everybody, and make a strong prayer.

What causes that bright view of the Supreme Field of Merit?

With the blessings of Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang, who is the Supreme Field of Merit, you went through and completed the entire practice. Because of this, Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang is very pleased and sends out strong light rays from his heart that illuminate the entire field of merit including the offerings.

All the offerings now finally dissolve up to the tree.

The tree dissolves up to the lion throne.

The throne, including the four directional protectors, dissolves into the protectors.

The protectors and the lotus petals they are standing on, dissolve into the Dakas and Dakinis.

They along with their lotus petals dissolve into the Shravaka Buddhas.

They along with their lotus petals dissolve into the Pratyeka Buddhas.

They along with their lotus petals dissolve into the Bodhisattvas.

The Bodhisattvas along with their lotus petals dissolve into the Buddhas,

The Buddhas along with their petals dissolve into the Kriya yidams.

The Kriya yidams dissolve into the Charya yidams,

The Charya yidams into the Yoga yidams,

The Yoga yidams into the Maha anu yoga tantra yidams.

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<sup>531</sup> Literature: Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Great Treasury of Merit*, p. 271-275. Dalai Lama, *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 174-175. In a guru-puja for longevity of the lama the field of merit is not dissolved.

Of the Maha anu yoga deities, the eastern ones dissolve into Yamantaka, the southern ones dissolve into Guhyasamaja, the western ones dissolve into Hevajra and the northern to Heruka. If you have visualized their lineages, they all dissolve into their respective mandalas.

All those of the Yamantaka lineage dissolve into your own root master, the Guhyasamaja lineage dissolves into the vast-lineage lamas, the Hevajra and Heruka lineages dissolve into the lamas of the deep or profound lineage.

The four groups of lamas each dissolve into their principal lama: [the Mahamudra lineage into Vajradhara on top, the vast lineage into Maitreya, the profound lineage into Manjushri, the masters into your root master].<sup>532</sup>

Those dissolve into the central principal lama<sup>533</sup>, Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang with the three beings. His lotus seat with sun and moon disc dissolves into him.

Then Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang comes your crown, facing the same way you do. On your crown the outer Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang, Lama Lozang, dissolves into Buddha Shakyamuni, who dissolves into Buddha Vajradhara.

Now Buddha Vajradhara sits on your crown and if you want to practice *dzok rim*, the completion stage, you do it here. You can also practice the *phowa* at this point. Though we taught it earlier, you could instead take those same verses and practice it here, while Buddha Vajradhara is on your crown.

Finally Buddha Vajradhara comes down through your central channel (you yourself in the form of Yamantaka) and dissolves into your heart, white or blue, with or without consort. As that happens, your mind, your consciousness, you yourself, and the Lama, the Yidam, all become one.

Through becoming one, you experience tremendous joy and happiness, which automatically, simultaneously, perceives wisdom or emptiness. Bliss-void develops within you; that is how you obtain blessings. And that is how you remain.<sup>534</sup>

This actually now links up with the practice of Mahamudra. I don't have time to go into the Mahamudra now, but I have done it elsewhere and you know about it.

Whenever you teach or give blessings, try to help or do healing, it is done from the Lama at your heart. Whatever you receive, whatever you are given or presented with, including prostrations, is received by Lama Vajradhara at your heart.

Basically that covers the complete actual practice.

## Conclusion

### Dedication

*Dhe tar gyi pei nam kar ge wa yang  
dü sum dhe shek say chay tam chay kyi  
dze pa mön lam ma lü drup pa dhang  
lung thoh dham chö dzin pei gyu ru ngo*

<sup>532</sup> For details on see page 113.

<sup>533</sup> Dalai Lama, *Union of Bliss and Emptiness*, p. 174: '... so that finally there are five gurus. Maitreya dissolves into the right arm of Lama Losang Tupwang Dorjechang, Manjushri into the left, Vajradhara into the crown, the root guru into the heart.'

<sup>534</sup> A simpler way was taught at the first winter retreat: 'By making the request with this verse, Lama Losang Tupwang Dorjechang comes down to the center of your heart chakra. By coming and dissolving in there, Lama Losang Tupwang Dorjechang's body and mind become inseparable from our consciousness -especially the ultimate subtle consciousness- along with its energy. Through the dissolving it becomes inseparably mixed together, it becomes one with no separation. You concentrate, meditate, for a little while on that.'

- st. 82. **I dedicate the pure virtues created here  
To accomplish the aims and wishes  
Of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the three times  
And to upholding the transmitted and realized Dharma.**

I dedicate all the virtues of doing this practice. I also dedicate myself to maintain the Dharma of scripture and insight: *lung* stands for teaching, learning, thinking, meditating and *thoh* stands for developing, achieving, analyzing.

By dedicating I make also use of the virtues of the enlightened beings [by adding my drop of virtue to their ocean of virtues]. Whatever I have and whatever they have, I dedicate to fulfill whatever they need to do, which is only to help beings.

I also pray that the wishes of all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the three times may be fulfilled.

*De yi thu lay tse rap kün tu dhah  
theg choh kor lo zhi dang mi dral zhing  
ngei jung jang sem yang dhah ta wa dhang  
rim nyei lam gyi drö pa thar chin shoh*

- st. 83. **By the force of this merit, throughout all my lives,  
May I never be separated from the four wheels of the Mahayana.  
May I complete the paths of Seeking Freedom, Bodhimind,  
Wisdom, and the two stages of Vajrayana.**

The first of these two verses is dedication. The difference between dedication and prayer is that in the former one you have something to dedicate, here the accumulated virtues, and the second is simply praying or wishing.

You pray not to be separated from the four wheels of the great supreme vehicle, the Mahayana:

1. Remaining in a place where positive karmas will generate.
2. Getting help from great beings.
3. Doing one's practice happily.
4. Having all advantages of the human life without any obstructions.<sup>535</sup>

You also seek blessings to complete the Three Principles of the Path – which are, first, seeking freedom or *ngei jung*, second, bodhimind or *jang sem*, and third, perfect view or *yang dhah ta wa* – as well as the tantric two stages, *rim nyei*, the generation stage and completion stage.

You pray that because of all this you may continue on these paths, accomplish them, and become fully enlightened.

#### Brief Prayer

*Churning the milk sea precepts of Sutra, Tantra,  
With the axial mountain of analysis,  
May I make this life an ambrosial vessel  
Of unprecedented eloquence; a composition  
For the lucky; a lamp that dispels endless gloom  
From each devoted student's heart  
And brings mundane and transcendent blessings;  
And a hook that summons all quickly  
To harvest the store of virtue that springs  
From cultivating this technique!  
  
And, to make all achievements as pure as the moon,  
I dedicate this so all beings may be cared for  
By the Holy Saviors, Roots of Blessing!<sup>536</sup>*

<sup>535</sup> Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, Great Treasury of Merit, p. 276. Geshe Lundup Sopha, *Cutting through Appearances; practice and theory of Tibetan Buddhism*. pg 36

<sup>536</sup> This brief verse at the end (transl. Joe Loizzo) is like the openingsprayer at page 29 not in our Lama Chöpa text.

**Auspicious prayers**

*Si zhei nam kar ji nyei ge tsen gyi  
deng dir mi shi gü pa kün dral te  
nay kap thar thuh ge lek nam khei dzö  
pün tsok pel la röl pei tra shi shoh*

- st. 84. **May we attain a vast treasure of immediate and ultimate happiness  
Through all the merit of samsara and nirvana  
Free of troubles from now on,  
And enjoy the good fortune of magnificent delight.**

Through the virtues of samsara and nirvana may all that is negative be cleared. May temporal and ultimate auspiciousness be accomplished. Ultimate auspiciousness is enlightenment. Temporarily, we really need to focus our mind on Dharma, Dharma that is the perfect path, the path that has no obstacles; those are our temporary needs. You may think, “what about my material needs?” Those are also taken care of; when there are no obstacles on the path, somehow you are not held back from paying your bills.

*Kün kyen lo zang drak pei chö kyi dher  
lap sum nam dhah tse chik drup la tsön  
nel jor rap jhung tsoh kyi yong gang we  
tup ten yün dhu nei pei tra chi shoh*

- st. 85 **May the Dharma communities of all-knowing Losang Drakpa  
Be filled with Sangha, yogis and yoginis who strive  
Purely, single-pointedly, to practice the three trainings,  
So that the good fortune of Buddha’s teachings may long endure.**

What the Dharma groups that follow Buddha Losang Drakpa need are the three baskets or trainings, of morality, concentration, and wisdom. As the assembly of such a center, we pray that each individual will achieve spiritual development. The goal for a Dharma center should be to foster development within the members so that the center will become the assembly or Sangha of spiritually developed persons. How wonderful it would be if we could be a Sangha of mahasiddhas yogis and yoginis, Dakas and Dakinis! (Not necessarily flying in the air, because flying in the air is nothing to be surprised at.) Maybe we are making a little progress in that direction, I hope; we are not completely there, there is still a long way to go, but hopefully one day it will be that way.

*Heart transplant.* I might as well tell you this story. It is a little gross, excuse me, I think I shared it with a couple of people anyway. Kyabje Song Rinpoche told it to me. Once in Delhi I asked him to do the Cittamani Tara secret initiation, called ‘transplant of heart’. He did that and kept on talking to me about history and the stories in it. He told me there was a guy in a village called Pembo, a little north of Lhasa. This guy had a couple of daughters and sons, he was quite well off. All his daughters got married and he brought brides in for all his sons, so he kept the whole family together. So he said, “My work for the material world is done; now I am going to go on the spiritual path. First I’m going to search for a lama to guide me.” He went everywhere and found one, who gave him that Cittamani ‘heart-transplantation’. The lama said, “Can you, whenever you say or hear my name, fold your two hands together and say what I will tell you?” He said, “Yes.” After that the lama told him terrible, very gross, dirty jokes. So he went back home and his daughter asked him, “Did you find a lama and did you learn something?” He said, “Yes, I found lama so and so and he said... blah blah blah,” and he told all of them. The whole village came to hear and he kept on repeating what he had been told. The young ones in the family got very embarrassed and thought he had gone a little senile or crazy. So they built a little hut for him up on the mountain and put him there away from the family; they isolated him. They brought him food and whatever he needed two or three times every day. One day when they went up to his hut, he was not there. Everybody went to search for him, but nobody could find him. Finally they got together and they heard him, they heard him saying something. They heard his own voice, from up in the air, saying, “By the kindness of the great guru I have practiced and I have achieved the ultimate enlightenment level. You people are a little unfortunate that you could not take advantage of it. I have left my mala, clothes, fin-

gernails and hair over there. Make a stupa around it and make circumambulations and we may hope to meet finally in the pure land.” That is what the father told them. By that time they realized he was a great being, but it was a little bit too late for them. So sometimes, when you think it is a little too far away and you’re not going to make it, you do make it.

*Zhön nü dü nay la ma lha tsoh la  
söl wa tap pe lo zang drah pa yi  
jin lap zhuk nay zhen dhön lhün gyi drup  
lo zang dor je chang gi tra shi shoh.*

- st. 86    **May we benefit others effortlessly  
Through Losang Drakpa’s blessings.  
Since childhood, I made requests to my Supreme Lama-Yidam.  
May we have the good fortune of Losang Dorje Chang.**

Here it says that Lozang Drakpa from his youth onwards made constant supplications to the Supreme Field of Merit. Because of that our prayers can be answered and we enjoy a continuous line of blessings. Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche, not long before he passed away, gave me a similar verse, which says:

May all obstacles of body and mind completely be cleared.  
May the blessings of Jamgon Lama<sup>537</sup> enter within your mindstream.  
May because of that all your activities of samsara and nirvana,  
such as helping, leading and teaching others  
as well as attaining full enlightenment be completed.

And that is why all of us are somehow connected in this lineage of blessings.

*Dö gü jor wa yar gyi tsoh tar phel  
kyön mey rik kyi dhal dro gyün chei may  
nyin tshen lo zang dham pei chö kyi dha  
phün tsok pel la röl pei tra shi shoh*

- st. 87.    **May our endowments swell like a summer lake.  
May we always take birth in faultless families.  
May we spend day and night with Losang’s holy Dharma  
And enjoy the good fortune of magnificent delight.**

May all needs whatsoever be fulfilled in an increasing stream like the water during the summer-rains in the mountains. May we attain a faultless life with the eighteen qualities, to spend our time day and night influenced by the Dharma, particularly Lozang Drakpa’s Dharma.

*Dhah soh nam kyi deng nay jang chup bar  
gyi dhang gyi gyur ge wa chi sak pa  
zhing dhir je tsün dham pey zuh kyi ku  
gyur mey dor je tar ten tra shi shoh*

- st. 88.    **Through the merit we have collected and will collect  
From now until we all attain enlightenment,  
May the good fortune of your holy form, incomparable Lama,  
Remain in this world, immutable as a diamond.**

By the virtues that we have accumulated from now till enlightenment, the virtues that we already have accumulated, and those we will accumulate, may the physical form in which you appear, and guide and help and teach, remain forever.

Thus we have completed the teaching part of the Lama Chöpa, including the oral transmission. I am very happy.

<sup>537</sup> Je Tsongkhapa.

**Interim (Between Formal Sessions)<sup>538</sup>**

In life there are easy and difficult periods, high and low. They are real difficulties, definitely, but the most important thing is enlightenment. And that you can get. You can get it, if possible within the lifetime, otherwise in the bardo, if not within a couple of lifetimes you're bound to be enlightened. Keep focusing on that.

Even if you can't say many sadhanas or mantras or do the long practices, basically just try to maintain your vows and keep your commitments. Even if it is in the simplest possible way, just saying the words alone will help to keep the commitment. That is the fundamental basis.

On top of that, keep your morality, which means be true to yourself. And then be kind. That is it, that is how you go in your life. Take the ups and downs of life as they come: that is the samsaric drama and melodrama. Recognize it as such. There is always happiness and sadness, it is real. However, it is also empty in nature and comes and goes. The long-term goal is the goal of enlightenment. So remain stable.

*End of the teaching retreat*

It is auspicious to start the teachings again.<sup>539</sup>

The essence of the Lama Chöpa is the outer, inner, secret and suchness offering to the Lama, who is inseparable from all enlightened beings and inseparable from your own consciousness.

The steps we have to take result in integration: offering one's own practice, making a connection with the enlightened mind of Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang, merging with it and becoming like that primordial mind.

Lama Chöpa, the essence of offering, offering one's practice, leads you to that level.<sup>540</sup>

This time<sup>541</sup> I would like to begin at the start of the Lama Chöpa text itself with what Panchen Lozang Chögyen, the First Panchen Lama, has written before the actual verses of the text:

*This text has not been written in India and been translated into Tibetan,  
however, to show that it is not something that has just been cooked up in Tibet,  
but is the authentic teaching of the Buddha and his disciples,  
the name of the text is given in Indian language: Guru Puja.  
Through your great kindness may I be protected at all times.*

*I bow to my great masters  
And I am also going to write this for the fortunate disciples  
in order to fulfill their needs.*

*For everybody who is seeking total liberation,  
the fundamental sources of our development,  
the accomplishment of ordinary and extraordinary qualities,  
the root of all that is the great Mahayana yoga.  
The root of all developments is the guru devotional practices.*

Then he quotes from the sutras:

The essence of all instructions [*me ngag*] begins with the perfect guru relationship. From that relationship intelligent profound faith, a worthy mind and all good qualities can grow.

Then he quotes Tsongkhapa from *Lines of Experience*:

Then, after (having taken refuge), you should see that the root cause excellently propitious for as great a mass of good fortune as possible for this and future lives is proper, zealous guru devotion in thoughts and actions to your sacred Guru who shows you the path (to Enlightenment). Thus you should please him by offering your practice of exactly what he says, which you would not forsake

<sup>538</sup> Also see page 34.

<sup>539</sup> Winterretreat 1995.

<sup>540</sup> Rinpoche ends by reading the long *Lama Chöpa* from the beginning.

<sup>541</sup> Starting the teachings again for auspicious reason, winter retreat 2000.



even at the cost of your life. I, the yogi, have practiced just that. If you would also seek liberation, please cultivate yourself in the same way.

In addition to that he quotes from the *Fifty Verses of Guru Devotion*:

All qualities, whether samsaric or non-samsaric,  
are rooted in the guru-devotional practice.  
Buddha Vajradhara himself says that all accomplishment  
totally depends on the vajra master. Know this and follow it properly.<sup>542</sup>

Also, from the *yönten rinchen düba*<sup>543</sup>:

Buddha, the person who has all qualities has said that all Buddhas totally depend on the guru. That means that guru devotional practice brings you all the Dharma development and leads you to total enlightenment. Good disciples who have great respect to the vajra master should have a learned vajra master. From him you gain all the qualities, including the transcendental wisdom. In order to purify negativities and accumulate merit, the best basis is your vajra master who is more important than all Buddhas together. Because of that, in order to make best use of our life, to get the essence out of life, the best thing is to follow a practice that not only has the guru devotion as basis but also possesses all the paths combined together. One should put all one's efforts into engaging in this practice.

Now I will read the beginning of the actual *Lama Chöpa* text:

*Dhe chen ngang lay rang nyi lama lha –*  
*From Great Bliss I arise as Lama-Yidam...*  
...<sup>544</sup> ...

With this we have completed the Lama Chöpa teaching with good omens, and hopefully do a little more in the future and give you a little more information. There is countless information in here. I guess that's it.

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<sup>542</sup> Verse 47.

<sup>543</sup> See note 94 on p. 30.

<sup>544</sup> Rinpoche reads the text up to verse 7, generation of Supreme Field of Merit.

## **Prajnaparamita**

### ***How Rimpoche found a complete Prajnaparamita text in 100,000 verses, handwritten in golden letters, and brought it to the USA***

When I was in Beijing, I was able to find a *Prajnaparamita* text. It looks to me that it is a Mongolian one. But it is written in Tibetan language in very good hand writing. It is written in gold. I counted each page and the text is complete.

I thought it was good fortune for Jewel Heart to have this and have it stay in the United States. And of course I had to smuggle it. By the time I had packed my bags, my brother said, 'You are lucky if you get through with this and not get stopped.' I asked him, 'If they stop me, will they lock me up?' and he said, 'No, but they will stop this and tell you that you can't take it out of the country.' So I said, 'Okay, if they stop me, you have to take it back and give it to the monastery in Kongpo. If the Jewel Heart people are lucky enough, it will get through, and if not, I will give it to the monastery in Kongpo.' So, nobody looked and it got through.

It is a complete *Prajnaparamita* text and it is very carefully done, page by page. Between each and every page another paper is inserted to protect the gold writing, so that the gold from one page doesn't rub against the next page. Somebody really took care. That person might have taken the whole life, or least a whole decade writing this, you know, by hand, word for word, letter by letter. It is really fortunate to get this. It is a couple of hundred years old, for sure. Either it was written in Tibet and taken to Mongolia or it was written in Mongolia. It is done in Mongolian style.

It was funny. I found this in a Beijing junk yard. A Mongolian woman had this in her store and did not want to sell it in single pages. She said that she had it for a couple of years and nobody wanted to buy the whole thing. A number of people were interested in buying a couple of pages each but she did not sell them, although she would have got much more money that way. She said, 'I was told it was not supposed to be sold that way.' So when I checked it not a single page was missing. It is amazing. I found it in this Chinese junk yard. I mean, they called 'Antique Bazaar'.

Now it is here and later, when we have finished the third floor of the Jewel Heart building, we hope to put it in there.

## VIII

### TSOH OFFERING

Tsoh is offering a feast, a feast for all enlightened beings and all sentient beings including ourselves. It is one of the most important practices of generosity and is also extremely effective for accumulation of merit. In particular, for those who have a Vajrayana practice, and especially for those who have a female tantra practice, the *tsoh* is a very important offering.

Because the purpose is to accumulate merit, in Tibet they used to offer very expensive, inedible tsoh, made of barley dough with butter poured in and not a drop of water. Butter, yogurt, a little bit of milk, and twenty-five pounds of cheese were put in.

My father used to do these tsoh only twice a year, during the compulsory days of Vajrayogini and Heruka. He never made red ones. He had his own style of white ones. Normally, the tsohs were not like the ones we put out here, but used to be very hard, completely made from butter, cheese, and some brown sugar. He didn't give you much to eat, you got a little and kept it. We had a lot of estates, and each of those estates was given one or two little ones to prevent storm or hail before the harvest. I was told that during twenty-five or thirty years none of our estates ever had hail damage, none. They used to burn the tsohs in the fire or take them round the fields on the estate. Sometimes the hail fell outside the field, so the tsoh did protect them. But then, my father was a totally different being, a great being. I don't say this because he is my father. He was almost the king of all the spirits in Tibet, they were all dead-scared of him, they couldn't even walk in front. He was like that and he made use of the tsohs in this way.

For the tsoh you need the best materials possible, both in quality and quantity. During my first encounters with Western Dharma-practitioners in Dharamsala and Delhi, they used a big plate with only one layer of biscuits! I thought, "What?!" You need both quality and quantity, a lot! As I told you a few days ago, recently I called Dagab Rinpoche in Germany to ask him whether he remembered certain things about the *Lama Chöpa* teaching that Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche had given.<sup>545</sup> He said, "No, I only remember the tsoh falling down." When Dagab Rinpoche said that, I remembered it too. Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche was sitting in the courtyard on the big throne and we, with maybe two thousand people behind us, were standing. During Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche's teaching of about twenty-eight days, we might have had a tsoh offering four, five or six times. Three times is normal, sort of compulsory. I remember the tsohs were a huge wall at the back, a huge wall like a two or three-story building. And all of a sudden it fell down. That is not a joke. That is the way in which Tibetans spent a lot of money. That is why the communist Chinese said, "You are wasting money, you are wasting butter, you are wasting food."

In the tsoh offering we use meat and it is compulsory to taste it, even for vegetarians. You don't have to take a huge piece, you can just taste it; a taste is all that's needed. It is also compulsory to taste the liquor, even though for monks it is totally forbidden to drink alcohol.

There is a long tea offering in which tea is made very attractive to encourage people not to drink alcohol. It describes how wonderful tea is, its qualities and wonderful taste. Then it goes on to talk about the number of people who worked to grow it and the sufferings they endured, how animals carried the bags of tea between China and Tibet, how the merchants had to take the load off the animals at night,

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<sup>545</sup> See page 12.

how they had to protect the animals and themselves, how month after month they crossed one mountain after the other, one river after the other river, and, in general, how difficult it was to get the tea from China to Tibet. But even though Tsongkhapa cut the alcohol out and replaced it by tea for the inner offering<sup>546</sup>, during the tsoh, he made it compulsory for even monks to taste the liquor, because it is so important.

Basically, as usual, although we have already generated the Supreme Field of Merit, you invite them once again for the feast.

### *Blessing the Offerings*

*Ngo wo ye she la nam par nang chö dhang chö dze  
so sö nam pa je lay wang po druk gi chö yül dhu  
dhe tong gi ye she khye par chen kay pay sa dhang  
bar nang nam khay kyön tham chay yong su khyap pay  
chi nang sang way chö trin dham dzay chen zih  
sam gyi mi khyap pay gang war gyur*

st. 1. **OM AH HUM! OM AH HUM! OM AH HUM!**

**Nature Pure, Offerings appear, Arousing bliss-void, Filling space**

This invocation verse at the beginning of the tsoh is very similar to the blessing at the beginning of the *Lama Chöpa*, except that it particularly focuses on the materials of the tsoh, food and drink.

You do the blessing remembering the three qualities: a) in reality it is of bliss-void nature; b) in appearance it is the tsoh; c) its function is to generate bliss.

The actual shape of the tsoh should be a nice female breast. (In terms of appearance, like silicon gel filled!) This shape is made to remind us once again of bliss. The breast is the source of joy. It is similar to the double triangle, the *dharmadhatu* reality source, in the Vajrayogini practice. This triangle is another source of joy; you don't need any further explanation, you can figure it out easily.

Once you do the first blessing verse, *ngo wo ye she la....* you don't have to do the next Tibetan verses about blessing the offering. You can use either of them, but don't have to use both.

### *Invitation*

Then you invite the guests of the tsoh offering. The purpose of the offering is to bring joy to the object to whom we offer. This also includes ourselves.

*Thuh je dhah nyi tsa gyü lama dhang  
yi dham lha tsoh kyap nei kön choh sum  
pa wo kha dro chö kyong sung mei tsoh  
chen dren chö pei nei dir sheh su söl*

st. 2. **You who are compassion itself,  
Root and lineage lamas, Yidams, Three Jewels,  
Heroes, Dakinis, and Dharma Protectors,  
I invite you to this feast.**

*Chi nang sang wei chö trin gya tsö ü  
rin chen lay drup zey pei dhen tri la  
zhap sen ö chah ten par zhuh nay kyang  
drup choh dhag la dhö gü ngö drup tsöl*

st. 3. **You who have attained the highest goal  
Please remain here, radiant, upon the jeweled throne,  
Amidst the ocean of outer, inner, and secret offerings,  
And grant me all the attainments I long for.**

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<sup>546</sup> See page 166

## Offering the Tsoh

Then you offer with these words:

*Ho ting dzin ngah dhang chah gye jin lap pei  
zah mei dü tzi tsoh chö gya tso dhi  
tsa gyü la mei tsoh nam nyei chir bül – OM AH HUNG  
dhö gü pel la röl pei tsim zay nay  
E ma ho jhin lap char chen up tu söl*

- st. 4     **To the host of root and lineage lamas**  
**I offer this vast feast purified by samadhi, mantra, and mudra.**  
**OM AH HUNG. Enjoying these magnificent delights,**  
**E ma ho Please shower me with great blessings.**

*Ho ting dzin ngah dhang chah gye jin lap pei  
zah me dü tzi tsoh chö gya tso dhi  
yi dham lha tsoh khor chay nyei chir bül – OM AH HUNG  
dhö gü pel la röl pei tsim zay nay  
E MA HO ngö drup char chen up tu söl*

- st. 5     **To the Yidams and their entourage**  
**I offer this vast feast purified by samadhi, mantra, and mudra.**  
**OM AH HUNG. Enjoying these magnificent delights,**  
**E MA HO Please shower me with great attainments.**

*Ho ting dzin ngah dhang chah gye jin lap pei  
zah me dü tzi tsoh chö gya tso dhi  
kön choh rin chen tsoh nam nyei chir bül – OM AH HUNG  
dhö gü pel la röl pei tsim zay nay  
E MA HO dham chö char chen up tu söl*

- st. 6     **To the host of the Three Precious Jewels**  
**I offer this vast feast purified by samadhi, mantra, and mudra.**  
**OM AH HUNG. Enjoying these magnificent delights,**  
**E MA HO Please shower me with holy Dharma**

*Ho ting dzin ngah dhang chah gye jin lap pei  
zah me dü tzi tsoh chö gya tso dhi  
kha dro chö kyong tsoh nam nyei chir bül – OM AH HUNG  
dhö gü pel la röl pei tsim zay nay  
E MA HO trin lay char chen up tu söl*

- st. 7     **To the host of Dakini and Dharma protectors**  
**I offer this vast feast, blessed by samadhi, mantra, and mudra.**  
**OM AH HUNG. Enjoying these magnificent delights,**  
**E MA HO Please shower me with great deeds of virtue.**

*Ho ting dzin ngah dang chah gye jin lap pei  
zah me dü tzi tsoh chö gya tso dhi  
ma gyur sem chen tsoh nam nyei chir bül – OM AH HUNG  
dha gü pel la röl pei tsim zay nay  
E MA HO Tröl nang duh ngel zhi gyur chik*

- st. 8     **To the host of all sentient beings**  
**I offer this vast feast, blessed by samadhi, mantra, and mudra**  
**OM AH HUNG. Enjoying these magnificent delights,**  
**E MA HO May suffering and ordinary perception cease.**

*Ting dzin* is meditative reality. The practitioners have meditated so much that what they have meditated has actually become real. That's why I like to call it 'meditative reality.' It is no longer just imagination, but becomes actualized.

I want to remind everybody that the purpose of the meditation is not just to have a calm and quiet mind. That is only a very small purpose. The actual, complete purpose of visualization is to become and actualize what one visualizes. That's why in many places you meditate as if you could physically touch and hold and feel your meditation object.

The first step is **imagination**. The second step is to **visualize** properly. In the third step, it becomes so strong that it is **almost real**. Finally, it does become **reality**, just as you have meditated it.

That is also the whole idea behind generating good thoughts. When you can really visualize properly and concentrate, it will become that way. The whole idea of being positive and sending out good thoughts is really sending some kind of message or some Vajrayana techniques, even in the New Age tradition! I am not looking down on the New Age, but somehow a few Vajrayana elements have been thrown in there. Actually, meditating and then becoming what you have meditated, is how you become a fully enlightened being. That is how everything can become pure.

In one of the *alternative verses for blessing the offerings*<sup>547</sup> it says: *ma dak trul pei ming yang me*, which means, 'it does not exist even in name', referring to impurity. Everything is so pure and perfect that impurity does not exist even in name. There are pure lands, pure beings, pure materials. When you create this, that is the actual blessing, making the impure pure. If such a meditative state becomes reality, what more do we need?

At our level we don't have that ability, but we still pretend to have it. So we imagine in the way which serves our purpose. I don't know if things actually become pure or not, but still, we are training ourselves, following in the footsteps of fully enlightened beings, in the way they did this. There will come a time when we will be able to purify just by thoughts. That is the whole, complete purpose.

So it goes: *ting dzin ngak dang chak gye*.... The material is blessed by **concentrated meditative reality**, and **mantra**, and **mudra**. All of these three spiritual sources are available and are combined. This makes the material into uncontaminated nectar. This is the tsoh.

We offer this to the Lama, then to the Yidams, then to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, then to the Dakas and Dakinis and the Protectors, and finally to all sentient beings in a way that fulfills their needs, whatever they are. For those who need a car, it becomes a car, for those who need a house, it becomes a house, or for those who need medicine, it becomes medicine. For those who need a companion, it becomes a companion. It becomes whatever is needed. So it is very great generosity.

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<sup>547</sup> E M A HO! In sublime intuitive play  
 All lands are Diamond realms,  
 All abodes, great Diamond Mansions,  
 Blossoming all-good ocean clouds.  
 All enjoyments have a wishful glow,  
 All beings are actually Heroes and Heroines,  
 Without even the words 'impure' and 'wrong',  
 Everything is perfect and vast.  
 HUM! From the mental peace Truth Body realm  
 Wind stirs, fire flares, and above,  
 Over a tripod of outfaced human heads  
 Marked by AH, in a skullcup, from OM  
 The various substances to be cooked.  
 Stacked above them, OM, AH, HUM,  
 Radiating their respective colors,  
 As wind fans fire to blaze, substances melt,  
 Boiling and steaming up clouds.  
 From the three syllables, rainbow lights  
 Emanate in ten directions, inviting  
 The three Vajras with elixirs  
 To absorb in the respective syllables,  
 Melt them to nectars, mix with the brew,  
 And purify, transform, and multiply, E M A HOH!  
 Making an ocean of wondrous brilliance!  
 OM AH HUM! OM AH HUM! OM AH HUM!

*Offering to the Vajra Master*

*E MA HO Tsoh kyi khor lo che  
 dhü sum dhe sheg sheg shül te  
 ngö drup ma lü jung wei nay  
 dhe tar she nay pa wo che  
 nam par tok pei sem bor nay  
 tsoh kyi khor lor gyün du röl A LA LA HO*

- st. 9 E MA HO Great collection of offerings!  
 Great hero, by following the path of the Blissful,  
 You have become the source of all attainment,  
 Enjoy forever the collection of this offering! A LA LA HO**

*The Vajra-master's reply*

*OM Dor je sum yeer mei pei dhah  
 rang nyi la ma lhar sel nay  
 AH Zah mey ye she dü tsi dhi  
 HUNG jhang chup sem lay yo mey par  
 lü nay lha nam tsim chir röl  
 A HO MAHA SUKHA*

- 10 OM I arise as the Lama-Yidam,  
 Inseparable from the three vajras.  
 AH with unshakeable bodhimind  
 HUNG - I enjoy this pure wisdom feast  
 To delight the deities in my body. A HO MAHA SUKA**

Of course, first you offer the tsoh to the Vajra Master<sup>548</sup> and then distribute it among the others. You can play songs with different musical instruments, if you want to.

During the tsoh period one should not gossip, talk, whisper, laugh, or joke. These actions are totally forbidden, and are supposed to be some kind of downfall. Even in between the praise you should not do them. The reason why gossip is not permitted is to avoid slander. Gossiping is normally done more or less at someone's expense, but this should be a happy occasion, a celebration. You can do anything that brings joy and is suitable for entertaining enlightened beings. It is very nice also to bring children, nice for the children, and for the adults, too. If the practice is too long for the children, you can bring them in at the time of the actual offering, and then they will also enjoy the *a la la ho* singing, etc.

Sometimes you can substitute doing a tsoh by buying food for the Vajra Master. You can also make offerings to five virgin girls who represent the five groups of Dakinis.

*Dakini Song*

*HUNG: De zhin shek pa tham che dhang pa wo dhang ni nel jor ma  
 kan dro dhang ni kan dro ma / kün la dhah ni söl wa dhep  
 dhe wa choh la gye pei He ru ka dhe we rap nyö ma la nyei ji nä  
 cho ga zhin dhu long chö pa yi ni lhen key de wei jor wa la zhuk so  
 AHLALA LA LA HO AHIIH AHA AHRA LIHO  
 dri me kan drö tsoh nam kyi tse we zi la le kün dzö*

<sup>548</sup> Notes of Gelongla Thubten Chöpel: If a vajra master is on the throne in front of you to receive the *tsoh*, then one representative of the assembled practitioners should stand in front of him and hold the *bala*, the *madana* and the other substances of the *tsoh*. If there are two, one can hold the *bala* and *madana* and the other can hold the remaining *tsoh*. If there are three representatives, they can hold the *bala*, *madana* and remaining *tsoh* between them. The representative, or one of them if there are two or three, should begin to recite stanza 9 and then the assembled practitioners join in. [stanza 10 is started by the Vajra-master. If there is no vajra master on the throne in front of you to accept the *tsoh*, then one or two representatives should stand facing the throne or shrine, while holding the *bala*, *madana* and other substances of the *tsoh*. While imagining the vajra master in front of them, the assembled practitioners should recite stanza 9 and 10 together. After these, the representative(s) should offer the *bala* and *madana* to the assembled practitioners starting from the front of the room. The other substances of the *tsoh* should then be shared out in a similar fashion.

- 11 HUNG – Oh Transcended Ones, Heroes, Yoginis, Dakas and Dakinis,  
All of you, hear my prayers!  
Heruka, delighting in supreme bliss,  
Adore the Dakini entranced by bliss!  
A LA LA LA LA HO A I AH A RA LI HOH  
Oh host of stainless Dakinis,  
look on with love and give all accomplishments.**

*HUNG: De zhin shek pa tham che dhang / pa wo dhang ni nel jor ma  
kan dro dhang ni kan dro ma / kün la dhah ni söl wa dhep  
dhe wa chen pö yi ni rap kyö pay / lü ni kün tu yo wei gar gyi ni  
chah gyei pe mar röl pei dhe wa che / nel jor ma tsoh nam la chö par dzö  
AHLA LA LA LA HO AHIH AHA AHRA LI HO  
dri me kan drö tsoh nam kyi / tse we zi la le kün dzö*

- 12 HUNG – Oh Transcended Ones, Heroes, Yoginis, Dakas and Dakinis,  
All of you, hear my prayer! Mind ecstatic with great bliss,  
Body in passionate dance, I offer to hosts of yoginis  
The play of great bliss in the mudra lotus.  
A LA LA LA LA HO A I AH A RA LI HOH  
Oh host of stainless Dakinis,  
Look on with love and accomplish all good deeds.**

*HUNG: De zhin shek pa tham che dhang / pa wo dhang ni nel jor ma  
kan dro dhang ni kan dro ma / kün la dhah ni söl wa dhep  
yi ong zhi wei nyam kyi gar ze ma / rap gye gön po kyö dang kan drö tsoh  
dhah gi dhün dhu zhuh te jin lap la / lhen kye dhe chen dhah la tsel du söl  
AHLA LA LA LA HO AHIH AHA AHRA LI HO  
dri me kan drö tsoh nam kyi / tse we zi la le kün dzö*

- 13 HUNG – Oh Transcended Ones, Heroes, Yoginis, Dakas and Dakinis,  
All of you, hear my prayer!  
Oh enchanting and peaceful dancer, Joyful Protector and Dakini host,  
Please come before me to bless me! Grant me spontaneous great bliss!  
A LA LA LA LA HO A I AH A RA LI HOH  
Oh host of stainless Dakinis,  
Look on with love and accomplish all good deeds.**

*HUNG: De zhin shek pa tham che dhang / pa wo dhang ni nel jor ma  
kan dro dhang ni kan dro ma / kün la dhah ni söl wa dhep  
dhe chen thar pai tsen nyi den pa kyo / dhe chen pang pei ka thup dhu ma y  
tse chih drol war me zhe dhe chen kyang / chu kyi choh gi u na nei pa yin  
AHLA LA LA LA HO AHIH AHA AHRA LI HO  
dri me kan drö tsoh nam kyi / Tse we zi la le kün dzö*

- 14 HUNG – Oh Transcended Ones, Heroes, Yoginis, Dakas and Dakinis,  
All of you, hear my prayer!  
You whose very nature is great bliss freedom,  
Never say that one attains freedom in a single life  
By abandoning great bliss for ascetic ordeals!  
Great bliss is found in the supreme lotus!  
In the perfect lotus with six signs.  
A LA LA LA LA HO A I AH A RA LI HOH  
Oh host of stainless Dakinis,  
Look on with love and accomplish all good deeds.**



*HUNG: De zhin shek pa tham che dhang / pa wo dhang ni nel jor ma  
 kan dro dhang ni kan dro ma / kün la dhah ni söl wa dhep  
 dham gyi u su kyi pei pema zhin / chak la kye kyang chak pe kyön ma gö  
 nel jor ma choh pe mei dhe wa yi / si pei ching wa nyur dhu drol war zo  
 A H L A L A L A H O A H I H A H A A H R A L I H O  
 dri me kan drö tsoh nam kyi / tse we zi la le kün dzö*

- 15 HUNG – Oh Transcended Ones, Heroes, Yoginis, Dakas and Dakinis,  
 All of you, hear my prayer! As a lotus arises out of the mud,  
 The great bliss of the supreme yogini's lotus  
 Is born from attachment, yet untainted by it.  
 May it swiftly free me from samsara's chains!  
 A L A L A L A H O A I A H A R A L I H O H  
 Oh host of stainless Dakinis,  
 Look on with love and accomplish all good deeds.**

*HUNG: De zhin shek pa tham che dhang / pa wo dhang ni nel jor ma  
 kan dro dhang ni kan dro ma / kün la dhah ni söl wa dhep  
 drang tzi jung nei nam kyi drang tsi chü / bung we tsog kyi kan nei tang wa tar  
 tsen nyi drug dhen thso kyi gyei pa ye / chü cheng pa yi ro yei tshim par dzö  
 A H L A L A L A H O A H I H A H A A H R A L I H O  
 dri me kan drö tsoh nam kyi / tse we zi la le kün dzö*

- 16 HUNG – Oh Transcended Ones, Heroes, Yoginis, Dakas and Dakinis,  
 All of you, hear my prayer! As swarms of bees drink deeply  
 Of honey's essence in the nectar flower,  
 May I be blissfully satisfied with the taste of essence  
 In the perfect lotus with six signs.  
 A L A L A L A H O A I A H A R A L I H O H  
 Oh host of stainless Dakinis,  
 Look on with love and accomplish all good deeds.**

*Alternative Dakini Songs*

*Ya gi dak pa ka chö og min gyi zhing na  
 Tsa duk lang tsö gek pei gyel yum gyi wang mo  
 Che wa sam ye gyu trül dra wa yi kö pe  
 Kel zang ka chö tri pei sa ken zhik dze ke  
 Druk chu tsa zhi e ying kan dro yi drong na  
 Chok gi dze den wang mo tsan daili dzum kar  
 Nyen chuk lok tar yo wei röl tse kyi gar gyi  
 Ewam then chik kye gei tön mo zhik gye do  
 Tsitta dap gye a wa dhuti yi ü na  
 Tong chen trö pa kün drel wö sel gyi ga ma  
 Wö ngei gyu mei lang tsö jo gek gi röl pei  
 Zung juk sam mi kyap pel te mo zhik tön no  
 A H O sang tei nyur lam zap mo, di kyi pa  
 Dam tsang pön lop dü pei tsom bu di ga wa  
 Ga kyi zung du juk pei tsok koe gyi pal la  
 Tak tu du drel me pei ten drel zhik shag yö*

**Somehow I heard that aloft, in the pure land of sky dwellers,  
 Like the highest land where the awakened becomes realized  
 Dwells the most powerful of those who catalyze enlightenment.  
 Shockingly beautiful, you are the one who shows every aspect of perfect beauty,  
 youth and sensuality.  
 You are the one who creates the endless knot of a billion,**

countless, infinite activities.

**You are the one who acts as a guide for the fortunate,  
Leading them to the realm of those whose domain is the sky.**

**In the sixty-four cities of the sky dwellers,  
the ecstasy of indivisible bliss and void,  
the joyful inner consort rises up smiling.**

**Great among the beautiful, you are the one who dances,  
moving playfully, joyously, like thin, supple lightning.**

**You are the one who lavishly hosts the festival of  
simultaneously born joy, indivisible bliss and void —**

**Display the eight petals of the heart at the center of the central channel.**

**Joyful Lady, clear light free of activity, the great void.**

**You are the intoxicating, mind-shattering, perfectly seductive youthful one who  
enjoys the illusion body of five-colored rainbow —**

**Show me the inconceivable union.**

**A HO How enjoyable the profound path, ultimate, quick and secret.**

**How happy, this gathering of master and disciples with flawless understanding,  
this glorious feast offering of happiness and joy together.**

**The auspicious sign free of closeness or separation, is sealed forever.**

*Emaho! De kyong kali la sok nang tu.*

*Emaho! Jang tok bar wei dü tsi*

*Ne sum kan drö dor jei lu kar kyong tang*

*Emaho! Nang wa kyi pö tak pa ka chö la chä dro,*

*Emaho! Dor je lo pön la sok yap yum*

*Emaho! Zak me dü tsi chö tang*

*Ne sum kan drö dor jei lu kar kyong tang*

*Emaho! Nang wa kyi pö tak pa ka chö la chä dro*

*Emaho! Yi dam kyil kor la sok lha tsok*

*Emaho! Zak me dü tsi chö tang*

*Ne sum kan drö dor je i lu kar kyong tang*

*Emaho! Nang wa kyi pö tak pa ka chö la chä dro*

*Emaho! Che drok dor je pün tsok la sok*

*Emaho! Zak me dü tsi chö tang*

*Ne sum kan drö dor jei lu kar kyong tang*

*Emaho! Nang wa kyi po tak pa ka chö la che dro*

*Ewamre! Ü kyi ti la lama yap yum zhuk la so. Ewamre!*

*Ewamre! Ye kyi chok la tap chok pa wo zhuk la so. Ewamre!*

*Ewamre! Yön gyi chok su she rap pa mo zhuk la so. Ewamre!*

*Ewamre! Pawo pamo tsok pei tsok kor gyei la so. Ewamre!*

*Ewamre! Tso kor la sok tsim pa druk den zhuk la so. Ewamre!*

*Ewamre! Di la tei tsom me che kel den tso la so. Ewamre!*

*Leftover Tsoh*

*HUNG Ma dhah trül nang ying su dhah*

*AH ye she lë drup dü tsi che*

*OM dö gū gya tso chen por gyur*

*OM AH HUNG (3x)*

**HUNG Impure mistaken appearances are purified in emptiness,**

**AH Great nectar accomplished from exalted wisdom,**

**OM It becomes a vast ocean of desired enjoyment.**

**OM AH HUNG (3x)**

*HO Ting dzin ngah dhang chah gyei jin lap pei  
zah me dü tzi tsoh chö gya tso dhi  
dham chen zhing kyong tsoh nam nyei chir büi OM AH HUNG  
dhö gü pel la röl pei tsim zay nay  
E MA HO nel jor trin lay tsül zhin drup*

**HO! To the host of sworn protectors  
I offer this vast feast purified by samadhi, mantra and moedra.  
OM AH HUNG. Enjoying these magnificent delights,  
E MA HO Please perform actions to benefit practitioners.**

*Kye par nel jor dhah chah la  
nei mei tshe dhang wang chuh dhang  
pel dhang drah dhang kel wa zang  
long chö gva chen kün thop ching*

**HO. Remaining guests and retinues,  
Please enjoy this feast for you.**

**May all Dharma teachers and their families,  
And especially those of us practicing here,  
Have health, longevity, and fortune,  
And attain our highest goals!**

*Zhi dhang gyei la sok pa yi  
lay kyi ngö drup dhah la tsöl  
dham tsik chen gyi dhah la sung  
ngö drup kün gyi tong drok dzö*

**You who keep the commitments,  
Grant me attainment of the four activities,  
Of pacifying, growth, power and wrath,  
As well as all other accomplishments.**

*Dü min chi dhang nei nam dhang  
dhön dang gek nam mey par dzö  
mee lam ngen dhang tsen ma ngen  
la je ngen pa mey par dzö*

**Eliminate untimely death and sickness,  
Harmful spirits and obstructions,  
Bring an end to bad dreams,  
Bad omens and unfortunate actions.**

*Jik ten dhe zhing lo lek dhang  
dru nam gye shing chö phel dhang  
dhe lek tham chei jung wa dang  
yi la dhö pa kün drup shok*

**May the world be in peace and the year be good.  
May the world have prosperity and spiritual principles flourish.  
May every joy and happiness come to pass,  
And every wish be fulfilled.**

*Jin pa gya cher chö pa dhi yi thü  
dro wei dhon du rang jung sang gyay nay  
ngön tse gyel wa nam kyi ma drol wei  
kye wö tsok nam jin pai dröl gyur chik*

**By the power of generosity,  
May I become Buddha for the sake of all beings.  
May all beings, unredeemed by Buddhas of the past,  
Attain liberation through the offerings made here.**

Then, of course, there is the leftover tsoh for those spirits who for karmic reasons cannot enjoy or use the tsoh. So we try to give a feast for them, too, with special mantra and mudra. Certain hungry ghosts, or spirits, because of their karma cannot even eat and are always extremely hungry, although they may be very rich. Because of too much miserliness, they just don't want to use their possessions. If anybody gives them something, they don't mind eating that. For some others, even if they try to eat something, it will not go through their throats, they can't use it. All this is possible. In samsara, all sorts of things happen. It is like an ocean, there are lots of things, good and bad, everything is there.

Once, the Indian Mahasiddha Ghantapa was out at night and somehow got caught up in a gathering of strange women. He had no idea what was going on. Actually, they were Dakinis having tsoh. All of a sudden, one of the women gave him a little piece of red human flesh and said, "Eat this!" Without any hesitation he ate it. That really was his last kick for becoming a mahasiddha. It happened to be a Dakini tsoh, they gave him a piece of human flesh, wherever they got that from, and without any hesitation he ate it. He hit the jackpot that way.

You give the leftover offering from your share; you don't give a leftover bite from your mouth, but you break a little piece off and give that. You have to take out the leftover tsoh straight away without looking back which is considered a bad omen. You go without hesitation, and certainly not dancing around. The leftover offering<sup>549</sup> you can do immediately after the tsoh or a little later. It does not matter, as long as you do it before the conclusion.

Everybody can be included in the tsoh, since you offer it to all sentient beings. On the other hand, it might not be a good idea for anyone who has a broken commitment with you to participate. Any material is suitable to be used for the tsoh, but if the material or the cost of the material, like money to buy it, comes from a person who has broken commitments, this becomes an obstacle to your development. That is one single little point to be careful of.

A broken commitment refers to a situation where someone has extreme difficulties with you and your practice. You should not be connected with a person who thinks you are terrible and whatever you do is not right. Also in that category are people who have problems with the Sangha as a whole and people who have major difficulties with the Vajra Master. But these have to be really deep, terrible difficulties. There are two sorts of having difficulties. One is when you don't get the things you want and sometimes just snap at a person who wants the best for you, likes you, and loves you. That is not a broken commitment at all. But if you hate somebody from the bottom of your heart, that is a broken commitment.

It's always better to do tsoh in a group rather than individually. If you can't help, if you can do it individually, but it is recommended to do it in a group, together, because the word tsoh itself means assembly.

Tsoh is very important. They say you should do it every day, if not, then every week, if not, every month, or at least twice a year.

That is basically the explanation for the tsoh offering.

### *Questions:*

Audience: Can you offer cigarettes for the tsoh?

Rinpoche: If you bless and transform them, it is possible. But it is not a good idea to burn them for the offering, just leave the packet there.

Audience: But can you smoke the cigarettes as you are enjoying the tsoh?

Rinpoche: To tell you the truth, smoking cigarettes is not non-virtuous. Not at all, as far as I know. There is a book, however, which was written in Sikkim by I don't know whom, that claims that if you take one puff of a cigarette, and exhale the smoke up into the air, it destroys 100,000 cities of the samsaric gods. If you exhale downwards it will destroy something else. If you exhale it directly in front of you, you create many causes of misery and illnesses for mankind. I read that about 30 years ago. But I don't really believe it. It must be a really fragile pure land of the gods that can be destroyed by the puff of a cigarette!

<sup>549</sup> If one does a *Lama Chöpa tsoh* for the purpose of longevity of the master and the master is present, then no left-over tsoh is gathered, blessed, and taken out. Directly after the dakini song follows the *Long Life Prayer* of the guru, one continues with the *Request to Remain*, (*dorje ku la.....*) in the *Seven Limbs*. See page 191.

That book also claimed that somebody had visions of Avalokiteshvara telling him things like that. But apart from that, I don't think smoking is negative. Indirectly, you are harming your body, sure. But there are a lot of other things that harm your body. I don't try to defend the cigarette smokers, but really, that's what it is. If it harms other people, you should not do it then, but to leave a packet of cigarettes for the tsoh, sure, why not? If you want to enjoy a cigarette outside in the open air, why not? As long as it does not bother anyone else, it is all right. But if it does bother others, it becomes a territorial issue. Is it bad for your health? That is a totally different question. In Vajrayana you are not allowed to abuse your body. Now you have to draw a line somewhere. A lot of things we do will harm our bodies. But are all those non-virtuous? This is a little bit of a gray area. By nature, smoking cigarettes by itself is not negative. But then, I should not say that. You know why? In the late 70s, in India, Lama Yeshe had just casually mentioned that smuggling is not necessarily negative by nature. It may be against the law, but not be negative by nature. So a number of Lama Yeshe's senior students started carrying certain things around, and many of them got caught and put into jail. They should not have done that. A number of people we know all landed in jails in different parts of the world. I am sure their organization was struggling financially as much as we are, so when he said that smuggling was not negative, everybody decided to make some quick money for the organization. So they were smuggling in various places and then somebody was caught in Delhi and put in jail, somebody in Honking, somebody else in Geneva, and in France, in Sydney, Melbourne, everywhere. For two or three years, I think they had to spend more money to get them out, than what they would have made. These are just some incidents I recall. So, one should not overreact to such a statement that, for example, smuggling or smoking is not non-virtuous by nature.

Audience: You said at some stage that the tsoh has a particularly strong connection to the female tantra practice. Why is that?

Rinpoche: The tsoh commitments come normally through female tantra initiations and teachings. The tsoh is relevant to both, male and female tantras, however, the tsoh commitments come from the female tantras. I don't have any other explanations.



## IX APPENDIX

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OUTLINES: LAMA CHÖPA, HOW TO INTEGRATE THE PRIMORDIAL ENLIGHTENED MIND

Source [and lineage]

Quality

Actual

*Who*

*Where*

*How*

(During the actual) Session

**PRELIMINARY**

*Motivation*

Cleaning the Space

Preparing the Altar

*Refuge, Generation of Bodhimind, Four Immeasurables*

*Purification*

*Blessing the Offerings*

**ACTUAL**

**GENERATING THE SUPREME FIELD OF MERIT**

*Generating the Commitment*

Place

Principal

In the Three Beings

In the Body Mandala

Retinue

*Dissolving the Wisdom*

**OFFERING THE SEVEN LIMBS**

*Prostrations*

Making Prostrations to the Root Master

Looking at the Root Master as Sambhogakaya

Looking at the Root Master as Nirmanakaya

Looking at the Root Master as Dharmakaya

Making Prostrations to Other Masters

Making Prostrations to the Lineage Masters

*Making Offerings*

Outer Offerings

External Offerings [4 water offerings and usual external offerings]

Five Sense Offerings

Mandala Offerings [outer-, inner, and practice mandala]

Practice Offerings

Inner Offerings

Secret Offerings

Suchness Offerings

Medicine Offerings

Offering Self as Service

*Purification*

*Rejoicing*

*Requesting the Teachings*

*Requesting to Remain*

*Dedication*

**MAKING REQUESTS**

*By Remembering the Advantages and Disadvantages*

*By Remembering the Qualities*

Quality of the Hinayana Master

Quality of the Mahayana Master

Quality of the Vajrayana Master

*By Remembering the Kindnesses*

Root Master Kinder than all the Enlightened Beings in General

Root Master Kinder than Buddha Shakyamuni

Root Master Kind Enough to be the Supreme Field of Merit



*Outer, Inner, Secret, and Suchness Supplications*  
*Single-Pointed Requests*

# SEEKING REALIZATION ON THE PATH TO ENLIGHTENMENT

*To Receive the Four Initiations*

*To Realize the Stages of the Path*

Guru Devotion as the Root of All Development

How to Train the Mind

## SUTRA METHOD

In Common with the Initial Scope

**Generating Interest in Future Lives**

**Method of Achieving Fortunate Future Lives**

In Common with the Intermediate Scope

**Generating Interest in Self-Liberation**

**Method of Achieving Self-Liberation**

Advanced Scope

**How to Develop Bodhimind**

Causal Development

Seeing Compassion as Root of Developing Bodhimind

Cultivating Bodhimind Through Exchange

Equalizing Self with Others

Exchanging Self for Others

Recognizing Faults of Self-Cherishing

Benefits of Cherishing Others

Conclusions

Actual Exchange

Give and Take

Other Points of Mind Training

Mentally Transforming Obstacles into the Path

Lifelong Practice and Signs of Bodhimind Development

Actually Transforming Obstacles into the Path

Actual Form of Development

Wishing form of Spirit of Enlightenment

Actual Spirit of Enlightenment

**Responsibilities of the Bodhisattva:**

Six Perfections (Paramitas)

Generosity

Morality

Patience

Diligence

Concentration

Wisdom

Yoga of Space-Like Wisdom

Yoga of Illusion-Like Aftermath

Special Quality of Real Wisdom

## TANTRA METHOD

Making One's Self Fit to Practice

Generation Stage

Completion Stage

## FORCEFUL TRANSFERENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Sutra Method

Tantra Method

## TO BE REBORN AS DISCIPLE

To Be the First Disciple

To Be Among Principal Disciples

## DISSOLVING THE SUPREME FIELD OF MERIT

## CONCLUSION

Interim (Between Formal Sessions)

ROOT TEXT: LAMA CHÖPA, HOW TO INTEGRATE THE PRIMORDIAL ENLIGHTENED MIND

PRELIMINARIES

- 1 From Great Bliss I arise as the Lama-Yidam.<sup>550</sup>  
My body radiates light, transforming all existence.  
Everything becomes pure.

REFUGE AND GENERATION OF BODHIMIND

2. With a radiant pure mind, I and all beings  
From now until we reach the heart of enlightenment  
Take refuge in the Lama and Three Precious Jewels.  
NAMO GURUBYE, NAMO BUDDHAYA,  
NAMO DHARMAYA, NAMO SANGHAYA (3x)
3. To benefit all beings,  
I will become a Lama-Yidam And lead all beings  
to a Lama-Yidam's supreme enlightenment.
- 4 For the sake of all beings,  
I shall quickly, quickly in this very life  
Become a Lama-Yidam, Primordial Buddha.
- 5 I shall liberate all beings from suffering  
And lead them to the great bliss of Buddhahood.  
Therefore I practice the profound path  
Of the yoga of the Lama-Yidam. (3x)

*Blessing the offerings*<sup>551</sup>

- 6 OM AH HUNG (x3)  
Nature pure. Offerings appear, Arousing bliss-void, Filling space.

GENERATING THE SUPREME FIELD OF MERIT<sup>552</sup>

- 7 In the space of bliss-void inseparable  
Amidst wondrous clouds of infinite offerings  
Is the tree that grants our every wish,  
Adorned with flowers, leaves, and fruit.  
At its crown, on a lion throne ablaze with jewels,  
You sit on a lotus, sun, and full moon, my Root Guru,  
Kind in three ways, the essence of all Buddhas.
- 8 You appear as a fully ordained monk  
With one face, two hands, and a radiant smile.  
Your right hand makes the gesture of teaching;  
Your left, in meditation, holds a bowl of nectar.  
You wear three saffron robes  
And a golden scholar's hat.

*... three beings*

At your heart is Buddha Dorje Chang,<sup>553</sup>  
Blue in color, one face, two hands

<sup>550</sup> Guru Yoga is the essence of all paths, the answer to making the best use of life. Start by generating bodhimind, taking refuge, meditating on the four immeasurables, followed by generating yourself in the form of either Yamantaka, Guhyasamaja or Heruka. From the body of the Yidam, light radiates and purifies all environments and their inhabitants. The environment becomes the mandala; its inhabitants, gods and goddesses. So accordingly, this verse follows.

<sup>551</sup> Inner and all other offerings should be blessed as in any other ritual in accordance with Mahayana tantra.

<sup>552</sup> In actual practice, it is important to say these words clearly, without haste, and visualize the meaning through the mind. Concentrate and meditate on the message given by the words.

<sup>553</sup> Here you can generate Buddha Dorje Chang as mentioned in the text, or Yamantaka or Heruka, which should be learned separately.

- 9 Holding dorje and bell, embracing Yingchukma.  
 You delight in the play of simultaneous bliss and void.  
 Adorned with jeweled ornaments and garments of heavenly silk,  
 Surrounded by a beautiful rainbow, you sit in diamond posture,  
 Radiant, and with every sign and mark.

.... *body mandala*

- Your purified aggregates are the five [blissful] Buddhas,  
 10 Your four elements, the four consorts,  
 Your senses, channels, and joints are actually Bodhisattvas,  
 The hairs of your body are twenty-one thousand Arhats,  
 Your limbs, the wrathful protectors,  
 Your light rays, directional guardians,  
 And all worldly beings are sheltered at your feet.

... *retinue*

- 11 You are encircled by a sea of root and lineage lamas, yidams,  
 Mandala deities, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas,  
 Heroes, Dakinis and Dharma protectors.

*Inviting and dissolving the wisdom*

Their three doors are marked by OM AH HUM.  
 From HUNG, hooking light rays invite the Wisdom Beings  
 From their natural abodes to remain inseparable.<sup>554</sup>

*Invocation*

- 12 You are the source of all happiness and joy:  
 Root and lineage lamas, yidams, Three Jewels,  
 Heroes, dakinis, and dharma protectors.  
 Out of your great compassion, please come here to stay.
- 13 In nature, phenomena are free of coming or going,  
 Yet you appear, performing deeds of perfect love and knowledge,  
 To suit the needs of various disciples.  
 Great Protector with your circle, please come here now.
14. OM GURU BUDDHA BODHISATTVA DHARMAPALA SAPARIWARA  
 EH HYA HIH DZA HUNG BAM HO.  
 The wisdom and commitment beings become one.

#### OFFERING THE SEVEN LIMBS<sup>555</sup>

*Praise*

- 15 I praise you, who with great compassion bestows  
 In an instant the three bodies of great bliss.  
 Oh Lama like a wish-fulfilling jewel,  
 You hold the Vajra. May I become like you!
- 16 I praise you, exalted wisdom of all the Buddhas  
 That manifests skillful means to tame us all,  
 Enacting the role of a saffron-robed monk.  
 Oh Refuge Protector, may I become like you!

<sup>554</sup> This is how you see the Lama inseparable from Dorje Chang, fulfilling the demand of the fifty verses of Guru Yoga. Aggregates, elements, etc., are generated in the form of five Dhiyani Buddhas and consorts, which fulfills the vajra mala tantras (In the body of the Vajra master, the Buddha's bodies remain sequential). 1) Generate the supreme field. 2) Invocation of wisdom beings, dissolving, and remaining permanent. 3) Seeing them as the completion of total refuge. This is the essence.

<sup>555</sup> Nagarjuna says: 'Forget all other offerings, concentrate on offering to the Lamas. Making them happy is sure to obtain wisdom. Making offerings to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas is important, but it is emphasized that making offerings to the lama is more important'. Therefore, the Seven Limb offerings follow.

- 17 I praise your abandonment of all wrong,  
Oh precious treasury of infinite excellence.  
Sole door to the source of help and happiness,  
Inestimable Lama, may I become like you!
- 18 I praise you, essence of Buddhas, Teachers even of gods,  
Source of the eighty-four thousand teachings.  
You shine resplendent in the hosts of extraordinary beings.  
Oh kind Lamas, may I become like you!
- 19 I praise the Lamas of every time and place,  
The Three Supreme Jewels, and all that is worthy of honor.  
I emanate limitless bodies to sing with faith and devotion  
Sweet anthems of praise. May I become like you!

*Offerings*<sup>556</sup>

- 20 Precious lama, my Refuge Protector,  
To you and your circle,  
I present oceans of clouds of various offerings.  
Four streams of cleansing nectar gently fall  
From magnificent vases ablaze with jewels.
- 21 Blossoming trees, lovely flowers, bouquets and garlands,  
Cover the ground and fill the sky.  
The heavens billow with blue summer clouds  
Of lazulite smoke from sweet fragrant incense.
- 22 Joyful light from suns and moons, flaming lamps,  
And glittering jewels  
Dispel the darkness of a billion worlds.  
Vast saffron, sandalwood, and camphor-scented seas  
Swirl out to the horizons in every direction.
- 23 Nourishing delicacies of a hundred flavors  
Are massed in mountains of divine and human food.  
Musical instruments of every variety  
Play sweet melodies pervading three realms.

*Five sense offerings*

- 24 Goddesses of inner and outer delights  
Bring objects of sight, sound, scent, taste, and touch.

*Mandala offering*

- 25 Refuge protector, treasure of compassion,  
Perfect field for growing good fortune,  
With a mind of devotion I offer to you  
The mountain and four continents a million times over,  
All precious royal emblems and possessions,  
Perfectly delightful environments and beings,  
And a grand treasury of divine and human enjoyments.

*Offering one's spiritual practice*

- 26 Within a wish-granting sea, a vast lotus  
Bearing actual and emanated offerings  
Arisen from samsara's and nirvana's virtues  
Captivates all hearts.  
The worldly and transcendent virtues

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<sup>556</sup> All the offerings are in nature and purpose seen as bliss-void inseparable. Offer according to these verses.

- 27 Of my own and others' three gateways brighten all places.  
This garden is suffused with myriad fragrances of all-good offerings,  
Is laden with fruits, the three trainings, two stages, and five paths.  
All this I offer to please you, precious Lama.

*Inner Offering*

- 28 I offer a libation of finest tea,  
Fragrant, with a hundred tastes and shining saffron color,  
Serving as the five hooks, five lamps, and all the rest,  
Purified, transformed, and increased to an ocean of nectar.

*Secret Offering*

- 29 I offer beautiful, magical consorts, a host of muses  
Born of heavens, poetry, spontaneity,  
Graceful mistresses of sixty-four passionate arts,  
Endowed with the enchanting glow of youth.

*Offering What Is*

- 30 I offer supreme, ultimate Bodhimind,  
Unobstructed bliss and wisdom arising as one,  
Inseparable from the nature of all,  
Spontaneous, beyond expression in thought or word.

*Offering Medicine and Myself as Servant*

- 31 I offer an array of fine medicines  
To cure the afflictions of four hundred and four delusions.  
And I offer myself as a servant to please you.  
Please keep me in your service as long as space endures.

*Purification*

- 32 All negative actions I have committed,  
Ordered, or rejoiced in from beginningless time,  
I regret and purify in your presence,  
And I resolve to remain alert.

*Rejoicing*

- 33 In nature, phenomena have no sign of inherent existence,  
I rejoice from my heart in the dream-like virtues  
that bring happiness and joy  
To ordinary and extraordinary beings

*Requesting the teachings*

- 34 From myriad clouds of your knowledge and love,  
Please shower vast and profound Dharma  
To grow, sustain and prosper a moonflower garden  
Of benefit and bliss for limitless beings.

*Requesting to remain*

- 35 Though your vajra body knows neither birth nor death,  
Please stay here to help me,  
Manifesting the ultimate union,  
Without entering nirvana until samsara's end.

*Dedication*

- 36 I dedicate the positive fortune here created  
To being cared for in life after life  
By my precious Lama, kind in three ways,  
So that I may attain the perfect union of Dorje Chang.<sup>557</sup>

<sup>557</sup> In the root tantras, it is explained that you should always perceive the qualities of the Lama and disregard the faults. Reflect on the advantages of correctly relying on your spiritual teacher and the disadvantages of not doing so. By thinking with single-pointed

*MAKING REQUESTS*

*Requesting by remembering the qualities*

- 37 Source of all excellence, ocean of moral discipline,  
Enriched with jewels of extensive learning,  
Second Buddha in saffron robes,  
You who keep the monastic vows, from my heart I pray!
- 38 You possess all ten qualities that make you fit  
To teach the path of the Buddhas  
Dharma master, emissary of all the Buddhas,  
Oh Mahayana Master, from my heart I pray!
- 39 Wise and patient, your three doors are well controlled.  
Without pretension or deceit, you understand Mantra and Tantra.  
Skilled in arts and teaching, you have twice ten qualities.  
Oh Lord of Vajra Masters, from my heart I pray!
- 40 You precisely teach the good path of the Blissful  
To the untamable beings of this degenerate age  
Unreformed by the Buddhas of the past.  
Oh compassionate Refuge Protector, from my heart I pray!
- 41 Now when Shakyamuni's sun is setting,  
You reenact the deeds of that great Victor  
For countless beings lacking protection and refuge.  
Oh compassionate Refuge Protector, from my heart I pray!
- 42 For us, even a single hair pore of your body  
Is praised as a merit field greater than all  
The Buddhas of the three times and ten directions.  
Oh compassionate Refuge Protector, from my heart I pray!

*Outer supplication*

- 43 From the web of your miracle powers and skillful means  
The ornament wheels of your three [blissful] bodies  
Appear in ordinary form to guide all beings.  
Oh compassionate Refuge Protector, from my heart I pray!

*Inner supplication*

44. Your aggregates, elements, senses, and limbs,  
Are the Fathers and Mothers of the five Buddha Families,  
Bodhisattvas, and wrathful deities. Oh Supreme Lama,  
You who are the Three Jewels, from my heart I pray!

*Secret supplication*

- 45 You are the essence of ten million mandala wheels  
That arise from the play of omniscient pristine awareness.  
All-pervading Lord of a Hundred Buddha Families, foremost Vajra-holder,  
Protector of the Primordial Union, from my heart I pray!

*Suchness supplication*

- 46 Pervasive nature of all things stable and moving,  
Inseparable from the play of faultless, spontaneous joy,  
Thoroughly good, from the beginning free from extremes,  
Oh actual, ultimate Bodhimind, from my heart I pray!

*Single-pinted request*

- 47 You are my Lama, you are my Yidam,

You are my Dakini and Dharma Protector;  
 From now until I attain enlightenment,  
 I shall seek no refuge other than you.  
 In this life, in the bardo, and until enlightenment,  
 Hold me in the hook of your compassion,  
 Free me from the fears of samsara and nirvana,  
 Grant me all attainments, be my constant companion,  
 And protect me from all obstacles.(x3)

*Receiving the Four Initiations in the form of blessing*

- 48 By the force of making these requests three times,  
 Light rays and nectars, white, red, and cobalt blue,  
 Stream forth from the centers of my Lama's body, speech, and mind
- 49 One by one and all together my four obstacles are purified,  
 I receive the four empowerments  
 And the seeds of the four Buddha bodies.  
 A duplicate of my Lama happily dissolves into me,  
 And I am blessed with inspiration.

#### SEEKING INSPIRATION TO REALIZE THE STAGES OF THE LAM RIM

*Guru devotion as root of all development*

- 50 Precious Lama, supreme field of good fortune,  
 Root of all goodness and joy, my Protector,  
 By the power of my offerings, respect, and prayers,  
 Gladly bless me with your care!

*Generating interest in future lives*

- 51 Knowing that life's liberties and opportunities  
 Are found but once and quickly lost,  
 Inspire me to grasp life's essential meaning  
 And not be distracted by pointless activities.

*Method of achieving fortunate future lives*

- 52 Aghast at the searing blaze of suffering in the lower realms,  
 I take heartfelt refuge in the Three Jewels.  
 Inspire me to intensify my efforts  
 To practice virtue and abandon vice.

*Generating interest in self-liberation*

- 53 Violently tossed by waves of addiction and karma,  
 Devoured by three sea-dragon sufferings,  
 Inspire me to develop the fierce determination to be free  
 From this endless fearsome ocean of samsara.

*Method of achieving fortunate future lives*

- 54 Having ceased to view this unbearable prison  
 Of cyclic existence as a pleasure grove,  
 Inspire me to raise the victory banner of freedom,  
 By practicing the Three Higher Trainings,  
 the treasure of extraordinary beings.

*Developing bodhicitta*

- 55 Recognizing that all suffering beings are my mothers,  
 Who have raised me in kindness again and again,  
 Inspire me to develop authentic compassion,  
 Like a mother's love for her only child.
- 56 No one wants even the slightest suffering,  
 Or is ever content with the happiness they have;

In this we are all alike.

Inspire me to find joy in making others happy.

- 57 Seeing that the chronic disease of self-cherishing  
Is the cause of my unwanted suffering,  
Inspire me to put the blame where blame is due  
And vanquish the great demon of clinging to self.

- 58 Cherishing beings and securing their happiness  
Is the gateway that leads to infinite excellence.  
Inspire me to hold others more dear than my life,  
Even when I see them as enemies.

- 59 In short, the naive work for their aims alone;  
While Buddhas work solely to benefit others.  
Having weighed the faults against the benefits,  
Inspire me to be able to exchange myself with others.

- 60 Since cherishing myself is the doorway to all downfalls,  
And cherishing others is the foundation of everything good,  
Inspire me to practice from my heart  
The yoga of exchanging self and others.

- 61 Therefore, supremely compassionate Lama,  
Inspire me to take the bad deeds, imprints, and sufferings  
Of all beings to ripen upon me right now,  
And to give to them my happiness and virtue  
So that all beings may be happy.(x3)

*Remaining Lojong points*

- 62 Even if the world and its beings,  
Filled with the results of negative actions,  
Pour down a rain of unwanted suffering,  
Inspire me to take these miserable conditions as a path,  
Knowing that this burns away my negative karma.
- 63 In short, whether conditions seem favorable or unfavorable,  
Inspire me to make a habit of happiness,  
By increasing the two types of Bodhimind  
Through practicing of the five forces, essence of all the Dharmas.
- 64 Whatever happens, may I use meditation at once,  
Applying the skillful methods of the four techniques.  
Inspire me to take advantage of this fortunate life  
By practicing the commitments and precepts of training the mind.

*Wishing form of spirit of enlightenment*

- 65 ‘Give and Take’ mounted on the breath is the magic device  
Bringing love, compassion, and the special mind.  
To save all beings from this world’s great ocean.  
Please bless me to awaken true Bodhimind.

*Actual spirit of enlightenment*

- 66 Restraining the mind with Bodhisattva vows  
Is the one path traveled by Buddhas of all three times.  
Inspire me to strive sincerely to practice  
The three moral disciplines of the Mahayana.

*The Paramitas*

- 67 Inspire me to perfect transcendent generosity,  
Through improving the mind that gives without attachment,



Transforming my body, wealth, and good deeds from all time  
Into whatever each being desires.

- 68 Inspire me to perfect transcendent moral discipline,  
By keeping, even at the cost of my life,  
My self-liberation, Bodhisattva, and Vajrayana vows,  
And by collecting good deeds and helping others.
- 69 Inspire me to perfect transcendent patience.  
Even if all the beings of the world  
Become abusive, critical, threaten, or even kill me,  
Undisturbed I will work for their benefit.
- 70 Inspire me to perfect transcendent joyous effort,  
By striving with tireless compassion for supreme enlightenment,  
Even if I must remain for many aeons  
In the deepest hell fires for the sake of each being.
- 71 Inspire me to perfect transcendent concentration,  
By abandoning mental sinking, wandering, and excitement,  
And meditating in single-pointed absorption  
On the true nature of reality – emptiness.
- 72 Inspire me to perfect transcendent wisdom,  
Through practicing space yoga in equipoise on the ultimate,  
Joining the bliss of supple ecstasy  
With the insight that discriminates what is.
- 73 Inspire me to complete the perfection of illusion-like aftermath,  
Realizing inner and outer phenomena lack true existence,  
Yet still appear, like an illusion, a dream,  
Or the reflection of a moon on a clear lake.
- 74 Inspire me to understand Nagarjuna's meaning,  
That there is no contradiction, but rather harmony  
Between the unfailing interdependence of cause and effect  
And lack of inherent existence in this world and beyond.

*Vajrayana*

- 75 Inspire me to embark on the swirling ocean of tantra  
Through the kindness of my navigator, the Vajra -holder,  
And to cherish more than my life  
My vows and commitments, roots of my attainment.

*Generation stage*

- 76 Inspire me to practice the first stage, the simulated yoga  
That transforms birth, death, and bardo  
Into the three Buddha bodies, so that when  
Ordinary perception and conception become pure,  
Whatever arises, may manifest as my Yidam.

*Completion stage*

- 77 As you place your feet, oh Glorious Protector,  
At the very center of my heart's eight petals,  
Inspire me to actualize in this very life  
The paths of clear light, illusion body, and their union.

*Forceful transference of consciousness*

- 78 If my death should come before I enter the path,  
Bless me to reach a Pure Land  
Through applying the instructions on the five powers,

The supremely forceful method of transference to Buddhahood.

*To be the first disciple*

- 79 From birth to birth, please bless me, oh Protector,  
Never to be separated from your loving care,  
And, as the foremost of your disciples,  
To hold every secret of your body, speech, and mind.

*To be among principle disciples*

- 80 Grant me the good fortune to be the first in your circle  
Wherever you manifest as a Buddha,  
And to accomplish spontaneously, without effort,  
All temporal and ultimate needs and wishes.

*Dissolving the Supreme Field*

- 81 Pleased by these requests, Oh Supreme Lama,  
To bless me, come to my crown with delight,  
And once again set your radiant feet  
Firmly at the center of the lotus of my heart.<sup>558</sup>

#### DEDICATION

- 82 I dedicate the pure virtues created here  
To accomplishing the aims and wishes  
Of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the three times  
And to upholding the transmitted and realized Dharma.
- 83 By the force of this merit, may I, throughout all of my lives,  
Never be separated from the four wheels of the Mahayana.  
May I complete the paths of Seeking Freedom, Bodhimind,  
Wisdom, and the two stages of Vajrayana.<sup>559</sup>

#### AUSPICIOUS VERSES

- 84 May we attain a vast treasure of immediate and ultimate happiness,  
Through all the merit of samsara and nirvana,  
Free of troubles from now on,  
And enjoy the good fortune of magnificent delight.
- 85 May the Dharma communities of all-knowing Losang Drakpa  
Be filled with Sangha, yogis and yoginis  
Who strive purely, single pointedly, to practice the three trainings,  
So that the good fortune of Buddha's teachings may long endure.
- 86 May we benefit others effortlessly  
Through Losang Drakpa's blessings.  
Since childhood, I made requests to my Supreme Lama-Yidam.  
May we have the good fortune of Losang Dorje Chang.
- 87 May our endowments swell like a summer lake;  
May we always take birth in faultless families;  
May we spend day and night with Losang's holy Dharma  
And enjoy the good fortune of magnificent delight.
- 88 Through the merit we have collected and will collect  
From now until we all attain enlightenment,  
May the good fortune of your holy form, incomparable Lama,  
Remain in this world, immutable as a diamond.

<sup>558</sup> Having meditated in this way, by mixing together one's mind and that of the Lama-Yidam, carry on all your activities throughout the day by perceiving all appearances as the union of great bliss and emptiness. Combining the yoga of generation and completion stage practices, persevere in gradually training your mind in the stages of the path.

<sup>559</sup> Thus by practicing in this way everyday, you are actually training in the essence of all sutras and tantras.

## TSOH OFFERING

- 1 OM AH HUNG (x3)  
Nature Pure, offerings appear, arousing bliss-void, filling space  
*Inviting the Guests*
- 2 You who are compassion itself,  
Root and lineage lamas, Yidams, Three Jewels,  
Heroes, Dakinis, and Dharma Protectors, I invite you to this feast.
- 3 You who have attained the highest goal  
Please remain here, radiant, upon the jeweled throne,  
Amidst the ocean of outer, inner, and secret offerings,  
And grant me all the attainments I long for.
- 4 To the host of root and lineage lamas  
I offer this vast feast purified by samadhi, mantra, and mudra.  
OM AH HUNG. Enjoying these magnificent delights,  
E MA HO Please shower me with great blessings.
- 5 To the Yidams and their entourage  
I offer this vast feast purified by samadhi, mantra, and mudra.  
OM AH HUNG. Enjoying these magnificent delights,  
E MA HO Please shower me with great attainments.
- 6 To the host of the Three Precious Jewels  
I offer this vast feast purified by samadhi, mantra, and mudra.  
OM AH HUNG. Enjoying these magnificent delights,  
E MA HO Please shower me with holy Dharma
- 7 To the host of Dakini and Dharma protectors  
I offer this vast feast, blessed by samadhi, mantra, and mudra.  
OM AH HUNG. Enjoying these magnificent delights,  
E MA HO Please shower me with great deeds of virtue.
- 8 To the host of all sentient beings  
I offer this vast feast, blessed by samadhi, mantra, and mudra  
OM AH HUNG. Enjoying these magnificent delights,  
E MA HO May suffering and ordinary perception cease.  
*Offering to the Vajra Master*
- 9 E MA HO Great collection of offerings!  
Great hero, by following the path of the Blissful,  
You have become the source of all attainment,  
Enjoy forever the collection of this offering! A LA LA HO  
*The Master's Reply*
- 10 OM I arise as the Lama-Yidam,  
Inseparable from the three vajras.  
AH with unshakeable bodhimind  
HUNG - I enjoy this pure wisdom feast  
To delight the deities in my body. A HO MAHA SUKA  
*Song of the Spring Queen*
- 11 HUNG – Oh Transcended Ones, Heroes, Yoginis, Dakas and Dakinis,  
All of you, hear my prayers!  
Heruka, delighting in supreme bliss,  
Adore the Dakini entranced by bliss!  
A LA LA LA LA HO A I AH A RA LI HOH  
Oh host of stainless Dakinis,  
look on with love and give all accomplishments.

- 12 HUNG – Oh Transcended Ones, Heroes, Yoginis, Dakas and Dakinis,  
All of you, hear my prayer! Mind ecstatic with great bliss,  
Body in passionate dance, I offer to hosts of yoginis  
The play of great bliss in the moedra lotus.  
A LA LA LA LA HO A I AH A RA LI HOH  
Oh host of stainless Dakinis,  
Look on with love and accomplish all good deeds.
- 13 HUNG – Oh Transcended Ones, Heroes, Yoginis, Dakas and Dakinis,  
All of you, hear my prayer!  
Oh enchanting and peaceful dancer, Joyful Protector and Dakini host,  
Please come before me to bless me! Grant me spontaneous great bliss!  
A LA LA LA LA HO A I AH A RA LI HOH  
Oh host of stainless Dakinis,  
Look on with love and accomplish all good deeds.
- 14 HUNG – Oh Transcended Ones, Heroes, Yoginis, Dakas and Dakinis,  
All of you, hear my prayer!  
You whose very nature is great bliss freedom,  
Never say that one attains freedom in a single life  
By abandoning great bliss for ascetic ordeals!  
Great bliss is found in the supreme lotus!  
In the perfect lotus with six signs.  
A LA LA LA LA HO A I AH A RA LI HOH  
Oh host of stainless Dakinis,  
Look on with love and accomplish all good deeds.
- 15 HUNG – Oh Transcended Ones, Heroes, Yoginis, Dakas and Dakinis,  
All of you, hear my prayer! As a lotus arises out of the mud,  
The great bliss of the supreme yogini's lotus  
Is born from attachment, yet untainted by it.  
May it swiftly free me from samsara's chains!  
A LA LA LA LA HO A I AH A RA LI HOH  
Oh host of stainless Dakinis,  
Look on with love and accomplish all good deeds.
- 16 HUNG – Oh Transcended Ones, Heroes, Yoginis, Dakas and Dakinis,  
All of you, hear my prayer! As swarms of bees drink deeply  
Of honey's essence in the nectar flower,  
May I be blissfully satisfied with the taste of essence  
In the perfect lotus with six signs.  
A LA LA LA LA HO A I AH A RA LI HOH  
Oh host of stainless Dakinis,  
Look on with love and accomplish all good deeds.

*Song of Tsoh*

Somehow I heard that aloft, in the pure land of sky dwellers,  
Like the highest land where the awakened becomes realized  
Dwells the most powerful of those who catalyze enlightenment.  
Shockingly beautiful, you are the one who shows every aspect of perfect beauty, youth and sensuality.  
You are the one who creates the endless knot of a billion,  
countless, infinite activities.  
You are the one who acts as a guide for the fortunate,  
Leading them to the realm of those whose domain is the sky.  
In the sixty-four cities of the sky dwellers,  
the ecstasy of indivisible bliss and void,

the joyful inner consort rises up smiling.  
 Great among the beautiful, you are the one who dances,  
 moving playfully, joyously, like thin, supple lightning.  
 You are the one who lavishly hosts the festival of  
 simultaneously born joy, indivisible bliss and void —  
 Display the eight petals of the heart at the center of the central channel.  
 Joyful Lady, clear light free of activity, the great void.  
 You are the intoxicating, mind-shattering, perfectly seductive youthful one who enjoys the illusion  
 body of five-colored rainbow —  
 Show me the inconceivable union.  
 A HO How enjoyable the profound path, ultimate, quick and secret.  
 How happy, this gathering of master and disciples with flawless understanding, this glorious feast  
 offering of happiness and joy together.  
 The auspicious sign free of closeness or separation, is sealed forever.

*Leftover Tsoh Offering*

- 23 HUNG Impure mistaken appearances are purified in emptiness,  
 AH Great nectar accomplished from exalted wisdom,  
 OM It becomes a vast ocean of desired enjoyment.  
 OM AH HUNG (3x)
- 24 HO! To the host of sworn protectors  
 I offer this vast feast purified by samadhi, mantra and moedra.  
 OM AH HUNG. Enjoying these magnificent delights,  
 E MA HO Please perform actions to benefit practitioners. *take tsoh outside*
- 25 HO. Remaining guests and retinues,  
 Please enjoy this feast for you.  
 May all Dharma teachers and their families,  
 And especially those of us practicing here,  
 Have health, longevity, and fortune,  
 And attain our highest goals!
- 26 You who keep the commitments,  
 Grant me attainment of the four activities,  
 Of pacifying, growth, power and wrath,  
 As well as all other accomplishments.
- 27 Eliminate untimely death and sickness,  
 Harmful spirits and obstructions,  
 Bring an end to bad dreams,  
 Bad omens and unfortunate actions.
- 28 May the world be in peace and the year be good.  
 May the world have prosperity and spiritual principles flourish.  
 May every joy and happiness come to pass,  
 And every wish be fulfilled.
- 29 By the power of generosity,  
 May I become Buddha for the sake of all beings.  
 May all beings, unredeemed by Buddhas of the past,  
 Attain liberation through the offerings made here.

## PRAYER TO THE GURUS OF THE MAHAMUDRA LINEAGE

### Homage to the Mahamudra

1. O Great *Vajradhara*, pervading all natures,  
Glorious first Buddha, Principal of all Buddha families,  
within the celestial mansion of the Spontaneous Three Bodies,  
I request you please to grant me your blessings  
so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
2. O Omniscient Superior *Manjushri*,  
Father of all the Conquerors of the three times  
in the Buddha Lands throughout the worlds of the ten directions,  
I request you please to grant me your blessings  
so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
3. O Venerable *Losang Drakpa*,  
Second Able One of Buddha's doctrine  
appearing in the northern Land of Snows,  
I request you please to grant me your blessings  
so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
4. O *Togden Jampel Gyatso*,  
Principal holder of the doctrine of the lineage of accomplishment  
of Je Tsongkhapa, the Son of Manjushri,  
I request you please to grant me your blessings  
so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
5. O *Baso Chökyi Gyeltsen*,  
who opened the treasury of instructions of the Whispered Lineage  
and ripened fortunate disciples,  
I request you please to grant me your blessings  
so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
6. O Supreme Yogi *Dharmavajra*,  
who completed the Yogas of the Two Stages  
and attained the Deathless Body of a Knowledge-holder,  
I request you please to grant me your blessings  
so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
7. O *Losang Dönyö Drupa* (Gyelwa Ensapa),  
who upheld the victory banner of the definitive doctrine

unfettered by the chains of the Eight Worldly Dharmas,  
 I request you please to grant me your blessings  
 so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
 train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
 and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.

8. O *Khedrup Sangye Yeshe*,  
 who guided all migrators  
 with your ordained aspect in the enchanting palace of the three bodies,  
 I request you please to grant me your blessings  
 so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
 train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
 and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
9. O Venerable *Losang Chögyen* (First Panchen Lama),  
 All-knowing One inseparable from the Protector of the Doctrine of the Conqueror,  
 Venerable Losang Drakpa,  
 I request you please to grant me your blessings  
 so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
 train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
 and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
10. O Great Yogi *Gendun Gyeltsen (Nechu Rapjampa)*,  
 who completed all practices,  
 integrating into one meaning the words of the Sutras, Tantras, and commentaries,  
 I request you please to grant me your blessings  
 so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
 train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
 and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
11. O Accomplished One *Gyeltsen Dzinpa* (Drungpa Tsöndru Gyeltsen),  
 who through great effort attained the supreme state  
 by experiencing the essence of the doctrine of the Conqueror, Venerable Losang,  
 I request you please to grant me your blessings  
 so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
 train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
 and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
12. O Holder of the great lineage *Könchok Gyeltsen*,  
 who are skilled at expounding to fortunate disciples  
 the essential nectar of the holy vast and profound Dharma,  
 I request you please to grant me your blessings  
 so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
 train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
 and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
13. O Venerable *Losang Yeshe* (Second Panchen Lama),  
 who are Venerable Losang Chökyi Gyeltsen himself,  
 returning for the glory of migrators and the doctrine,  
 I request you please to grant me your blessings  
 so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
 train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
 and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.

14. O Venerable *Losang Trinle* (Lhapa Tulku),  
 who accomplished the profound path of the Whispered Lineage,  
 blessed directly by the venerable Buddhas,  
 I request you please to grant me your blessings  
 so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
 train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
 and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
  
15. O Supremely Accomplished One *Drupwang Losang Namgyel*,  
 who completed the practice of the essential meaning of the Conqueror,  
 Venerable Losang's Whispered Lineage,  
 I request you please to grant me your blessings  
 so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
 train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
 and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
  
16. O Kind *Kachen Yeshe Gyeltsen*,  
 who out of compassion elucidate without error  
 the instructions of the Venerable Lama's Whispered Lineage,  
 I request you please to grant me your blessings  
 so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
 train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
 and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
  
17. O Venerable *Purchok Ngawang Jampa*,  
 who spread throughout all the central lands and the border regions  
 the essence of the unmistakable doctrine of the entire path,  
 I request you please to grant me your blessings  
 so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
 train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
 and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
  
18. O *Panchen Pelden Yeshe*,  
 who as a glorious first Buddha in an ordained aspect  
 ripened the whole of China and Tibet with the Dharma,  
 I request you please to grant me your blessings  
 so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
 train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
 and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
  
19. O *Khedrup Ngawang Dorje*,  
 who single-pointedly accomplished all the attainments,  
 the completion of the excellent paths of Sutra and Tantra,  
 I request you please to grant me your blessings  
 so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
 train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
 and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
  
20. O Venerable *Ngulchu Dharmabhadra*,  
 Protector who clarified the Conqueror's doctrine through explanation and composition,  
 with skill and steadfastness, like a second Buddha,  
 I request you please to grant me your blessings  
 so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
 train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
 and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.



21. O *Yangchen Drupei Dorje*,  
 whose eyes of great, unobservable compassion are never closed,  
 and whose profound and extensive wisdom is like that of Manjushri,  
 I request you please to grant me your blessings  
 so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
 train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
 and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
22. O *Khedrup Tendzin Tsöndrü*,  
 who completed the Yogas of bliss and emptiness  
 and went directly to the capital city of Union,  
 I request you please to grant me your blessings  
 so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
 train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
 and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
23. O *Lozang Tsöndru Gyeltsen*  
 You who hold the banner of the Doctrine of explanation and attainment  
 and have completed the realization of the profound paths,  
 I request you please to grant me your blessings  
 so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
 train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
 and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
24. O *Losang Dönyö Drubpa*,  
 You who hold the essence of the doctrine of the three trainings  
 And are untainted by the defilements of faults and downfalls,<sup>560</sup>  
 I request you please to grant me your blessings  
 so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
 train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
 and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
25. O reverend *Drub-Kangpa Geleg Gyatso*,  
 You who are the second conqueror, the lord Losang Dragpa,  
 Who again manifested the dance of the saffron-robed monk,  
 I request you please to grant me your blessings  
 so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
 train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
 and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
26. O kind *Phurchog Ngawang Jampa*,  
 You who have illuminated the treasure of the doctrine  
 Of the profound and extensive path to all fortunate ones,  
 I request you please to grant me your blessings  
 so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
 train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
 and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
27. O sublime and wise *Jamyang Shaypa Könchog Jigmey Wangpo*,  
 You who are proficient in illuminating the noble paths  
 Free from extremes through your loud laughter of stainless logic.  
 I request you please to grant me your blessings  
 so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,

<sup>560</sup> The translations of the verse 24-32 and 35 are taken from Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light of Bliss*.

train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.

28. O reverend (*Gung-tang*) *Tenpey Drönme*,  
You who are peerless in your propagation of the explanations and attainments  
Constituting the paramount system of the victorious noble-minded one,  
I request you please to grant me your blessings  
so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
  
29. O reverend *Kónchog Gyaltsen (Amdo Pelmang)*  
You whose strong body of experiential realization is greatly developed  
Through tasting the protector lord Manjushri's nectar-like ear-whispered lineage,  
I request you please to grant me your blessings  
so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
  
30. O great yogi *Ngödrub Rabten*,  
You who hold single-pointedly the banner of the doctrine  
Of the attainment lineage in not one fixed place only,  
I request you please to grant me your blessings  
so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
  
31. O tutor (*Tha-tsay*) *Gedun Gyatso*,  
You who have completed the excellences of abandonment and realization  
And caused to descend the dharma-rain of good explanations for living beings,  
I request you please to grant me your blessings  
so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
  
32. O glorious *Tenpey Nyima*,  
You who have reached every high attainment of the two tantric stages  
And were crowned among all the wise of supreme omniscience,  
I request you please to grant me your blessings  
so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
  
33. Venerable *Pabongka Trinle Gyatso*,  
who through the power of your love for all migrators,  
upheld the victory banner of the doctrines of Sutra and Tantra,  
I request you please to grant me your blessings  
so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.
  
34. Kind *Losang Yeshe* (Trijang Rinpoche),  
Spiritual Guide who, for fortunate disciples,  
promoted the heart-essence of the-Venerable Second Conqueror,  
I request you please to grant me your blessings

so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.

35. O my most kind root gurus,  
You who gloriously appear for the sake of faithful disciples  
At the seat of the former venerable yogis,  
I request you please to grant me your blessings  
so that I may cut the creeping vine of self-grasping within my mental continuum,  
train in love, compassion, and bodhicitta,  
and swiftly accomplish the Mahamudra of the Path of Union.

36. Please grant me your blessings  
so that I may see my Venerable Guru as a Buddha,  
overcome attachment for the abodes of Samsara,  
and having assumed the burden of liberating all migrators,  
accomplish the common and uncommon paths,  
and swiftly attain the Union of the Mahamudra.

37. This body of mine and your Body, O Spiritual Father,  
this speech of mine and your Speech, O Spiritual Father,  
this mind of mine and your Mind, O Spiritual Father,  
through your blessings may they become inseparably one.

## BATHING THE DEITIES

*Visualize the bath house:*

In an exquisitely fragrant bath house  
With an inlaid floor of brightly shining crystal,  
Dazzling columns aglitter with jewels,  
And a canopy festooned with shimmering pearls –

*Bathe the merit field:*

Just as gods bathed [Buddha Shakyamuni]  
Immediately after his birth,  
I, too, will bathe [the merit field]  
With water divine and pure.  
*Om sarva tathagata abhisekata samaya shriye ah hum.*

I bathe [the root guru] Munendra Vajradhara,  
Whose body was produced by ten million excellent virtues,  
Whose speech fulfills the hopes of limitless beings,  
And whose mind sees all things exactly as they are.  
*Om sarva tathagata abhisekata samaya shriye ah hum.*

I bathe the Lineage of Widespread Activities.  
I bathe the Lineage of the Profound View.  
I bathe the Lineage of Divinely Inspired Practice.  
I bathe all the lineage gurus.  
*Om sarva tathagata abhisekata samaya shriye ah hum.*

I bathe the Buddhas, who teach us.  
I bathe the holy dharma, that gives refuge.  
I bathe the sangha, who provide direction.  
I bathe the Triple Gem, our place of refuge.  
*Om sarva tathagata abhisekata samaya shriye ah hum.*

*Dry the merit field:*

I wipe their bodies with cloth beyond compare,  
Clean and scented with exquisite fragrances.  
*Om hum tram hrih ah kaya visodanaye soha.*

*Anoint them:*

With the finest perfumes that fill all the triple-thousand worlds  
I anoint these Lords of Sages,  
Whose radiant bodies are like shining gold  
That has been fired, burnished, and washed.

*Offer clothing as you recite:*

To those who attained the immutable vajra bodies  
I offer with a faith that is immutable  
Divine raiments thin, soft, and light.  
May I, too, achieve the vajra body.

*Offer adornments as you recite:*

Naturally adorned with the major and minor marks,  
The Conquerors seek no other form of adornment.  
Still, by offering them the finest of jewel ornaments,  
May all beings achieve a body adorned with the major and minor marks.

*Invite them to return to their previous seat:*

In your compassion for me and all beings  
And through your miraculous powers  
O Bhagavan, please remain present here  
As long as I continue to worship you.

## FIFTY VERSES OF GURU DEVOTION

*by Aryadeva*

1. Bowing in the proper way at the lotus feet of my Guru  
Who is the cause for me to attain the state of a glorious Vajrasattva,  
I shall condense and explain in brief what has been said  
In many stainless tantric texts about Guru devotion.  
Therefore listen with respect.
2. All the Buddhas of the past, present and future,  
Residing in every land in the ten directions,  
Have paid homage to the tantric masters  
From whom they have received the highest empowerments.  
Is there need to mention that you should too?
3. Three times each day with supreme faith  
You must show the respect you have for your Guru  
Who teaches you the tantric path,  
By pressing your palms together, offering a mandala as well as flowers  
And prostrating touching your head to his feet.
4. Those who hold ordination vows,  
If your Guru is a layman or your junior,  
Prostrate in public while facing such things as his scriptural texts  
In order to avoid worldly scorn.  
But in your mind prostrate to your Guru.
5. As for serving your Guru and showing him respect,  
Such as obeying what he says, standing up when he comes  
And showing him to his seat-these should be done even by those  
With ordination vows whose Gurus are lay-men or their juniors.  
But in public avoid prostrating and unorthodox actions such as washing his feet.
6. In order for the words of honour of neither the Guru  
Nor the disciple to degenerate,  
There must be a mutual examination beforehand  
to determine if each can brave a Guru-disciple relationship.
7. A disciple with sense should not accept as his Guru  
Someone who lacks compassion or who is angry, vicious or arrogant,  
Possessive, undisciplined or boasts of his knowledge.
8. A Guru should be stable in his actions,  
Cultivated in his speech, wise, patient and honest.  
He should neither conceal his shortcomings  
Nor pretend to possess qualities he lacks.
9. He should be an expert in the meanings of the tantra and  
In its ritual procedures of medicine and turning back obstacles.  
Also he should have loving compassion and  
A complete knowledge of the scriptures.
10. He should have full expertise in both ten fields,  
Skill in the drawing of mandalas,

Full knowledge of how to explain the tantra,  
Supreme pure faith and his senses fully under control.

11. Having become the disciple of such a protecting Guru,  
Should you then despise him from your heart,  
You will reap continual suffering as if you had disparaged all the Buddhas.
12. If you are so foolish as to despise your Guru,  
You will contract contagious diseases and  
Those caused by harmful spirits.  
You will die a horrible death caused by demons, plagues or poison.
13. You will be killed by wicked kings or fire,  
By poisonous snakes, water, witches or bandits,  
By harmful spirits or savages, and then be reborn in a hell.
14. Never disturb your Guru's mind.  
Should you be foolish and happen to do this,  
You will surely boil in a hell.
15. Whatever fearful hells have been taught,  
Such as the Hell of Uninterrupted Pain,  
It is clearly explained that those who disparage their Gurus  
Will have to remain there a very long time.
16. Therefore exert yourself wholeheartedly  
Never to belittle your Tantric Master  
Who makes no display of his great wisdom and virtues.
17. If from a lack of awareness you have shown disrespect to your Guru,  
Reverently present an offering to him and seek his forgiveness.  
Then in the future such harms as plagues will not befall you.
18. It has been taught that for the Guru to whom you have pledged  
Your word of honour to visualise as one with your meditational deity,  
You should willingly sacrifice your wife, children and even your life,  
Although these are not easy to give away.  
Is there need to mention your fleeting wealth?
19. Such practice of offering can confer even Buddhahood  
On a zealous disciple in his very lifetime,  
Which otherwise might be difficult to attain  
Even in countless millions of eons.
20. Always keep your word of honour.  
Always make offerings to the Enlightened Ones.  
Always make offerings also to your Guru,  
For he is the same as all the Buddhas.
21. Those who wish to attain the inexhaustible state of a Buddha's Wisdom Body  
Should give to their Guru whatever they themselves find pleasing,  
From the most trifling objects to those of best quality.
22. Giving to your Guru is the same as making continual offerings to all the Buddhas.  
From such giving much merit is gathered.

From such collection comes the supreme powerful attainment of Buddhahood.

23. Therefore, a disciple with the good qualities of compassion,  
Generosity, moral self-control and patience  
Should never regard as different his Guru and the Buddha Vajradhara.
24. If you should never tread on even your Guru's shadow,  
Because the fearsome consequences are the same as destroying a stupa,  
Is there need to mention never stepping on or over his shoes or seat,  
sitting in his place or riding his mount?
25. A disciple having great sense  
should obey the words of his Guru joyfully and with enthusiasm.  
If you lack the knowledge or ability to do what he says ,  
Explain in polite word why you cannot comply.
26. It is from your Guru that powerful attainments,  
Higher rebirth and happiness come.  
Therefore make a whole-hearted effort never to transgress your Guru's advice.
27. Guard your Guru's belongings as you would your own life.  
Treat even your Guru's beloved family with the same respect you show for him.  
Have loving regard for those closely around as if they were your own dearest kin.  
Single-mindedly think in this way at all times.
28. Never sit on the same bed or seat as your Guru, nor walk ahead of him.  
At teachings do not wear your hair in a top-knot, a hat, shoes or any weapons.  
Never touch a seat before he sits down or if he happens to sit on the ground.  
Do not place your hands proudly on your hips or wring them before him.
29. Never sit or recline while your Guru is standing nor lie while he is sitting.  
Always be ready to stand up and serve him skillfully in an excellent manner.  
In the presence of your Guru never do such things as spit,  
cough or sneeze without covering your head.  
Never stretch out your legs when at your seat, nor walk back and forth  
without reason before him. And never argue.
30. Never massage or rub your limbs.  
Do not sing, dance or play musical instruments for other than religious purposes.  
And never chatter idly or speak in excess or too loudly  
Within range of your Guru's hearing.
31. When your Guru enters the room get up from your seat and bow your head slightly.  
Sit respectfully in his presence.  
At night or at rivers or on dangerous paths,  
With you Guru's permission you may walk before him.
32. In the direct sight of his Guru a disciple with sense should not sit with his body  
Twisted around, nor leaning casually against pillars and such.  
Never crack your knuckles, play with your fingers or clean your nails.
33. When washing your Guru's feet or his body, drying, massaging or shaving him,  
Precede such actions with three prostrations and at their conclusion do the same.  
Then attend to yourself as much as you like.

34. Should you need to address your Guru by his name,  
Add the title 'Your Presence' after it.  
To generate respect for him in others, further honorifics may be used.
35. When asking for your Guru's advice first announce why you have come.  
With palms pressed together at your heart, listen to what he tells you  
Without letting your mind wander.  
Then when he has spoken you should reply, "I shall do exactly as you have said."
36. After doing what your Guru has told you,  
Report what has happened in polite, gentle words.  
Should you yawn or cough, clear your throat or laugh in his presence,  
Cover your mouth with your hand.
37. If you wish to receive a certain teaching, request three times,  
Your palms pressed together while kneeling before him on your right knee.  
Then at his discourse sit humbly with respect, wearing appropriate clothing  
That is neat and clean, without ornaments, jewellery or cosmetics.
38. Whatever you do to serve your Guru or show him respect  
Should never be done with an arrogant mind.  
Instead you should never be like a newly-wed bride,  
Timid, bashful and very subdued.
39. In the presence of the Guru who teaches you the path,  
Stop acting in a conceited, coquettish manner.  
As for boasting to others what you have done for your Guru,  
Examine your conscience and discard all such acts.
40. If you are requested to perform a consecration, an initiation into a mandala  
Or a fire offering ceremony or to gather disciples and deliver a discourse,  
You may not do so if your Guru resides in that area,  
Unless you receive his prior permission.
41. Whatever offerings you receive from performing such rites as  
the consecration known as Opening the Eyes,  
You should present all these to your Guru.  
Once he has taken a token portion, you may use the rest for whatever you like.
42. In the presence of his Guru a disciple should not act as a Guru  
To his own disciples and they should not act towards him as their Guru.  
Therefore before your own Guru stop your disciples from showing you respect  
Such as rising when you come and making prostration.
43. Whenever you make an offering to your Guru  
Or whenever your Guru presents you with something,  
A disciple with sense will present and receive this using both hands  
And with his head slightly bowed.
44. Be diligent in all your actions, alert and mindful  
Never to forget your word of honour.  
If fellow-disciples transgress what is proper in their behaviour,  
Correct each other in a friendly manner.
45. If because of sickness you are physically unable to bow to your Guru



And must do what normally would be prohibited,  
 Even without his explicit permission, there will be no unfortunate consequences  
 If you have a virtuous mind.

46. What need is there to say much more.  
 Do whatever pleases your Guru and  
 Avoid doing anything he would not like.  
 Be diligent in both of these.
47. ‘Powerful attainments follow from doing what your Guru likes’  
 This has been said by the Buddha Vajradhara himself.  
 Knowing this, try to please your Guru fully with all the actions  
 of your body, speech and mind.
48. After a disciple has taken refuge in the Three Jewels and  
 Developed a pure awakening mind,  
 He should be given this text to take to heart  
 on how to abandon his own arrogant self-will and follow  
 In his Guru’s footsteps along the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment.
49. By studying the prerequisite training of Guru devotion and  
 the Stages of the Path, common to both the sutra and tantra,  
 You will become a suitable vessel to hold the pure doctrine.  
 You may then be given such teachings as tantra.  
 After receiving the proper empowerments, recite out loud the fourteen root vows,  
 And take them sincerely to your heart.
50. As I have not made the mistake when writing this work  
 of adding my personal interpretation,  
 May this be of infinite benefit to all disciples who would follow their Guru.  
 By the limitless merit I have gathered in this way,  
 May all sentient beings quickly attain the state of Buddha.

translation A. Berzin  
 in Wangchung Dorje, the ninth Karmapa, *The Mahamudra eliminating the darkness of ignorance*, supplemented by Asvaghosa’s *Fifty stanzas of Guru devotion*.

## THE THIRTY-TWO DEITIES OF GUHYASAMAJA

### *Five buddhas - five skandhas*

1. Crown: buddha **Vairochana** [Tib. *Nangdze Dorje*], the white eastern buddha, aggregate of **form**.
2. Throat: buddha **Amitabha** [Tib. *Pema Dorje*], the red western buddha, aggregate of **perception**.
3. Heart (in front of Vajradhara): buddha **Akshobya** [Tib. *Mikyö Dorje*], blue central buddha, aggregate of **consciousness**.
4. Navel: **Ratnasambhava** [Tib. *Rinchen Dorje*], the yellow southern buddha, aggregate of **feeling**.
5. Secret place: **Amogasiddhi** [Tib. *Dönyö Dorje*], the green northern buddha, aggregate of **motivation** /compositional factors.

### *Four consorts - four elements*

6. Navel: white **Lochana** [Tib. *Chema*], **earth** element.
7. Heart: blue **Mamaki** [Tib. *Mamaki*], **water** element.
8. Throat: red **Pandaravasini** [Tib. *Gö Karmo*], **fire** element.
9. Crown: green **Tara** [Tib. *Drolma*], **air** element.

### *Eight bodhisattvas*

#### *Six senses bodhisattvas*

10. Eyes inside: white **Ksitigarbha** [Tib. *Sahi Nyingpo*], **eye**-sense.
11. Ears inside: yellow **Vajrapani**, [Tib. *Chagna Dorje*], **ear**-sense.
12. Nose inside: yellow **Akashagarbha** [Tib. *Namka Nyingpo*], **smell**.
13. Root of the tongue: red **Avalokiteshvara** [Tib. *Chenrezig*], **taste**.
14. Heart (behind Akshobya/in front of Vajradhara): red **Manjushri** [Tib. *Jampelyang*], **mental sense power**.
15. Private parts: green **Sarvanivarana-viskambini**, [Tib. *Tibsil*] **body sensation**.

#### *Two more bodhisattvas*

16. Crown above Vairochana/ Tara: white **Maitreya** [Tib. *Jampa*], all the **veins/nerves**.
17. Twelve major **joints** (shoulders, elbows, wrists, hips, knees, ankles): green **Samantabhadra** [Tib. *Küntu zangpo*].

### *Five offering deities*

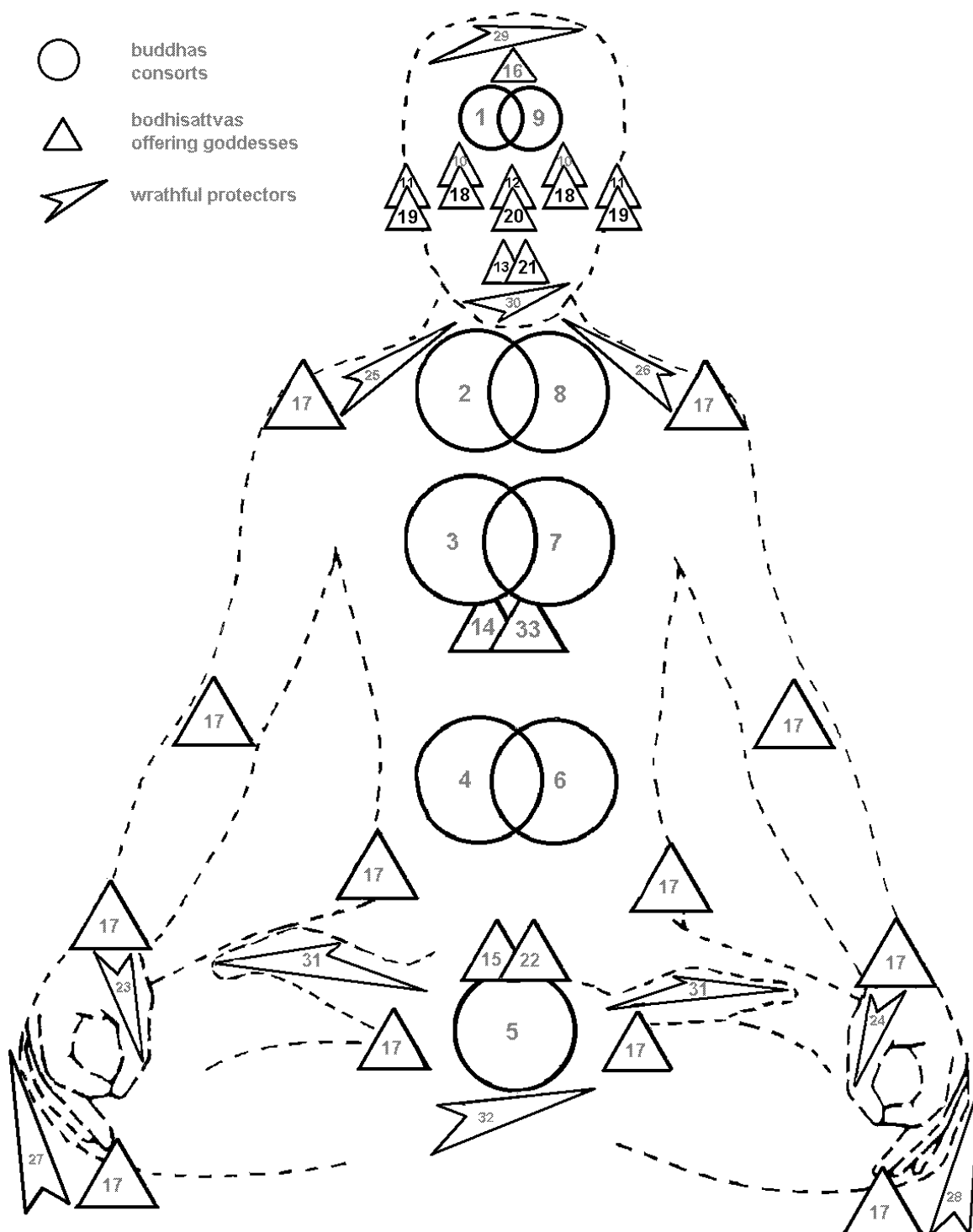
18. Eyes outside: white **Rupavajra** [Tib. *Zu Dorjema*], **form**.
19. Ears outside: yellow **Shabtavajra** [Tib. *Dra Dorjema*], **music**.
20. Nose outside: red **Gandavajra** [Tib. *Tri Dorjema*], **smell**.
21. Tip of the tongue: green **Rasavajra** [Tib. *Rö Dorjema*], **taste**.
- [33. Heart: white **Vajradhatuni**, [Tib. *Chöying Dorje*] offering deity of space]
22. Tip of the private parts: blue **Parshavajra** [Tib. *Regja Dorjema*], **touch**.

### *Ten wrathful protectors*

23. Root of the thumb right hand: black **Yamantaka** [Tib. *Shinje She*].
24. Root of the thumb left hand: white **Aparajita** [Tib. *Shinje Mitupa*].
25. Right shoulder: dark blue **Achala** [Tib. *Myowa*].
26. Left shoulder: dark-blue **Takkiraja** [Tib. *Ndöbe Djewo*].
27. Right knee: blue **Nildanda** [Tib. *Yungwo Je*].
28. Left knee: blue **Mahabala** [Tib. *Tobo Je*].
29. On the crown (flat on the back above Maitreya): yellow-green **Ushnisha Chakravartin** [Tib. *Tsudro Kollo Djuwa*].
30. Between tongue and lips: red **Hayagriva** [Tib. *Tamdin*].
31. Inside the two soles of the feet: blue **Sumbaraja** [Tib. *Ngonje Gyalpo*].
32. At the sex-organs (below Amoghasiddhi): blue **Amritakundalini** [Tib. *Dutzi Gyewa*].

- You may give all deities their own color and color the body light grey in order to make clear the white-colored figures.
- Where two circles or triangles are joined deities are [first] facing each other and [later on] going into union.
- If putting Samantabhadra's at every joint is too complicated, one may put one Samantabhadra at the heart to represent all.
- Vajradhatuni does not belong to the 32 deities of Guhyasamaja, therefore is counted as the 33rd. At the heart of Lama Lozang Thubwang Dorjechang there are: five, six or seven deities: [Shakyamuni with in his heart] Vajradhara, Akshobya, Mamaki, Manjushri, Vajradhatuni, and possibly Samantabhadra.
- Note: these are only the deities of the Guhyasamaja practice. For the total of the 'body-mandala' of the *Lama Chöpa* see page 111ff.

DEITIES ON THE BODY  
according to the Guhyasamaja practice



## HET VELD VAN VERDIENSTE

*handleiding tot de opbouw van de visualisatie*

Wees je bewust van een oneindige vreugdevolle **ruimte** – *eenheid van leegte en gelukzaligheid*.  
In die ruimte – gevuld met offergaven – een paradijselijk landschap,  
glanzend en gepolijst als lapis lazuli,  
met groene weiden, zonbeschenen bergketens en majestueuze bomen.  
In het midden bevindt zich een uitgestrekt melk-**meer** – *de drie hoofdpaden naar verlichting*.

Daaruit rijst de reusachtige wereldboom op, de **wensvervullende boom**  
die onze *uiteindelijke* en ook *tijdelijke* wensen vervult.

De boom wordt ondersteund door **twee nagas**, de waterdraken van **wijsheid** en *compassie*.

De boom is samengesteld uit de edelste materialen:

Hij heeft **gouden wortels** van *liefde-mededogen*.

Zijn **zilveren stam** met **lapis lazuli takken**, **blauwrobijnen twijgen**

en **kristallen bladeren** symboliseren de *zes paramitas*.

Zijn **rode-paarden bloemen** zijn de *22 bodhicittas*,

zijn **diamanten vruchten** de *vier manieren om anderen te helpen*.

De bloemen verspreiden een hemelse geur, door de bladeren zingt de Dharma.

Wie deze boom ziet, hoort, aanraakt, ruikt of ervan eet wordt bevrijd van lijden en negativiteiten,  
en verkrijgt ook op aards gebied al wat hij nodig heeft.

De boom heeft zeven takken:

drie buigen naar rechts, drie naar links en een gaat recht naar boven.

Op de top van de middelste tak [op een duizendbladige lotus]

is een prachtige, grote, met juwelen bezette vierhoekige **troon**,

gedragen door acht **sneeuwleuwen**, de *vier vormen van zelfvertrouwen* symboliserend.

Op de troon ligt een elf-lagige, 1000-bladige **lotus**, een **zon-** en een **maan-**kussen.

De kussens symboliseren dat wie erop zit *zonder smet* is en *wijsheid* en *methode* bezit.

*Mijn leraar als drievoudig wezen*

Op die troon [midden in de vierbladige top laag van de lotus] zit mijn leraar – **Lama**.

Zijn verschijningsvorm is die van Tsong Khapa – **Lozang**,

innerlijk is hij boeddha Sakyamuni – **Tubwang**,

in essentie is hij boeddha Vajradhara – **Dorjechang**.

De uiterlijke verschijningsvorm – Lama Lozang – is wit met een roze tint,  
heeft één hoofd, twee handen en glimlacht.

Zijn rechterhand is in de **belerende**, zijn linker in de **meditatiehouding** –  
*het samengaan van actief in de wereld zijn en verinnerlijking*.

De bedelnap in zijn schoot is gevuld met de drievoudige **nectar** die de *vier hindernissen* overwint.

Op de bloem aan zijn rechterschouder is het **zwaard van wijsheid**,

op die aan zijn linkerschouder een **wijsheidsboek**.

Manjushri in drievoud: Lama Lozang, zwaard en boek.

In zijn hart het wijsheidswezen boeddha **Sakyamuni** – goudkleurig en in de gebruikelijke houding.

In diens hart het concentratiewezen boeddha **Vajradhara**

in vereniging met zijn gezellin Vajradhatu Ishvari –

beiden **blauw**kleurig met alle ornamenten.

Alle drie met alle kenmerken van een boeddha

straalt vanuit de **HUNG** in hun hart vijfkleurig licht uit dat een stralenkrans om hen heen vormt.

*Dit is de ene leraar – Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang.*

*Zijn lichaam als mandala**De vijf buddhas – transformatie van de vijf skandhas*

In het kruincentrum de **witte Vairochana** - getransformeerde *vorm* - *spiegelende* wijsheid  
 In het keelcentrum de **rode Amitabha** – getransformeerde *waarneming* - *discriminerende* wijsheid  
 In het hartcentrum de **blauwe Akshobhya** – getransformeerde *bewustzijn* - *allesomvattende* wijsheid  
 In het navelcentrum de **gele Ratnasambhava** – getransformeerde *gevoel* - wijsheid van *gelijkheid*  
 In het basiscentrum de **groene Amoghasiddhi** – getransformeerde *scheppende kracht* - wijsheid *die alles tot stand brengt*

*De vier gezellinnen – transformatie van de elementen*

In het navelcentrum [tegenover Ratnasambhava] **witte Lochana** – het *aarde* element  
 In het hartcentrum [tegenover Akshobhya] **blauwe Mamaki** – het *water* element.  
 In de keel [tegenover Amitabha] **rode Pandaravasini** – het *vuur* element.<sup>561</sup>  
 In de kruin [tegenover Vairochana] **groene Tara** – het *lucht* element.  
 De dhyani buddhas en hun gezellinnen kijken elkaar aan, gaan (nog) niet in vereniging.

*De zes zintuig-bodhisattvas, de vier offergodinnen, en nog twee bodhisattvas*

In de twee ogen een **witte** bodhisattva **Ksitigarbha**, de *oogzin* symboliserend, aan de oogpoort de offergodin van de *vorm*, **witte Rupavajra**.  
 In de twee oren –*gehoorzin* – een **gele** bodhisattva **Vajrapani**, aan de oorpoort de offergodin van het *geluid*, **gele Shabdavajra**.  
 In de neus de *reukzin*, de **gele** bodhisattva **Akashagarbha**, aan de neuspoort de godin van de *geur*, **rode Gandhavajra**.  
 In de mond de *smaakzin*, de **rode** bodhisattva **Avalokiteshvara**, aan de mondpoort de godin van de *smaak*, **groene Rasavajra**.  
 In het hart de **rode** bodhisattva **Manjushri** en de offergodin van de ruimte, **witte Vajradhatuni**  
 In de basis de *lichaamszin*, de **groene** bodhisattva **Sarvanivarana-viskambini** en aan de poort de offergodin van de *tast*, **blauwe Parshavajra**.  
 De bodhisattvas en offergodinnen kijken elkaar aan, gaan (nog) niet in vereniging.  
 Op de kruin [boven boeddha Vairochana en zijn gezellin maar nog onder de schedel] de **witte** bodhisattva **Maitreya**, die het *vaat- en zenuwstelsel* symboliseert.  
 In de schouders, heupen, knieën, enkels, ellebogen en polsen een **groene** bodhisattva **Samantabhadra**, die de *spieren en gewrichten* symboliseert.

*De tien beschermers*

Visualiseer ten slotte tien strijdbare beschermers:  
 in de twee duimen rechts een **blauwzwarte Yamantaka** en links een **witte Aparajita**,  
 in de twee schouders rechts **Achala** en links **Takkiraja**, beiden **donkerblauw**  
 in de twee knieën rechts **Nildanda** en links **Mahabala**, beiden **blauw**  
 tussen tong en lippen de **rode Hayagriva**  
 net onder de schedel de **geelgroene Ushnisha Chakravartin**,  
 in de basis de **blauwe Amrita kundalini**,  
 in de twee voetzolen twee **blauwe Sumbarajas**.  
*Tot zover (met uitzondering van Vajradhatuni) de 32 deities van Guhyasamaja.*

Verder zijn de lichaamsharen van Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang de 21,000 arhats, is elke huidporie een boeddha-veld waarin ontelbare boeddha-activiteiten plaatsvinden, vormen de lichtstralen die uitgaan van zijn lichaam een gordel van beschermers, terwijl de wereldlijke goden kussens onder zijn voeten zijn.

*Dit is het lichaam als mandala:*

*de ruimte of ontmoetingsplaats van de verlichte wezens,  
 de basis van waaruit zij hun verlichtingswerk kunnen doen,  
 en voor de beoefenaar het veld van concentratie.*

<sup>561</sup> Meer precies: op de warmte-plek iets onder het keelcentrum.

*Zijn gevolg*

Vanuit het hart van Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang  
gaat een lichtstraal uit naar **voren** en genereert daar  
de eigen **levende leraar** met eromheen alle leraren van wie je lessen hebt ontvangen.

Dan zendt de Lama een straal naar **rechts** waar hij een **oranje Maitreya** genereert  
met de overleveringslijn van de methoden: met o.a. Asanga,  
Vasubandhu .... Haribhadra ... Lama Serlingpa, Atisha, Drom Rinpoche en de Kadampa leraren.

Dan zendt hij een straal naar **links** waar hij een **oranje Manjushri** genereert  
met de overleveringslijn van de wijsheid: Nagarjuna, Aryadeva,  
Buddhapalita, Chandrakirti, Shantideva ... Atisha en Drom Rinpoche en de Kadampa meesters.

Dan zendt hij licht naar **boven** waar de overleveringslijn van mahamudra verschijnt:  
**boeddha Vajradhara**, Manjushri, Je Tsong Khapa .... Ensapa, Khedrup Je,  
Panchen Lozang Chogyen ..... Guntang Jampelyang ....etc. allen in Manjushri vorm.

Dan op de elf lagen bloembladen van de lotusbloem:  
op de vier bloembladen van de bovenste laag,  
(waarop in het midden de troon van Lama Lozang Tubwang Dorjechang):  
rechts (van de Lama) **Guhyasamaja**, voor **Yamantaka**, links **Heruka** en achter **Hevajra**.  
Visualiseer van deze vier ieders overleveringslijn boven hun hoofd.

Daaronder:

Op de 2e laag – in ‘t rond – Kalachakra, Vajrayogini en andere **maha anu yoga deities**.

Op de derde laag de **deities van de yoga tantra**

Op de vierde laag die van de **carya tantra**

Op de vijfde laag die van de **krya tantra**, Avalokiteshvara, Tara etc.

Op de zesde laag de **boeddhas**: 35 boeddhas van zuivering, 8 medicijn boeddhas, de 1000 boeddhas, de  
boeddhas van de tien richtingen

Op de zevende laag de **bodhisattvas**, als Avalokiteshvara, Manjushri, Vajrapani

Op de achtste laag de **mahayana arhats** [= boeddhas] en **pratyeka boeddhas**

Op de negende laag de **sravakas**, zoals de zestien arhats

Op de tiende laag de **dakas en dakinis**, de vajrayana sangha

Op de onderste laag de **dharma-beschermers**: Mahakala, Chogyal, Palden Lhamo, Setrabchen.

Buiten om de troon staan tenslotte de 4 beschermers van de vier richtingen.

*Dit is het veld van verdienste, het veld van kwaliteiten.*

*Het zijn kwaliteiten die binnen ons bereik kunnen komen als we ons hierop richten.*

*Iedere figuur in dit veld is een manifestatie van de Lama, is de Lama.*

*Deze voorstelling, dit voertuig van symbolische wezens (c.q. verbindteniswezens)  
is de plaats waarnaar we de wijsheid uinodigen om in te dalen.*

THE SUN  
or  
DOUBT TENDING TOWARDS CORRECT BELIEF

Whenever you make me aware of my faults,  
Doubt will arise.

Whenever you show me the nature of the sun,  
Jealousy will arise.

Whenever you show me the human side of the sun,  
Desirous attachment will arise.

Mountains of doubt, jealousy and attachment  
prevent the sun to shine,  
Its light disappears.

Whenever I see all you have given to me,  
Whenever I see all you have changed in me,  
Whenever I see all your tenderness  
Whenever I experience your cutting through my conceptions,  
Whenever I see all the glory you are,  
I have to hide my face for the sun  
Because you will burn me.

Whenever I see how ungrateful I am  
Whenever I see how much I demand  
Whenever I realize how my devotion to you  
Serves only my own benefit  
I am scared to death that you will leave me.

There is nothing to request than only your patience  
Nothing to request than only your help  
In overcoming these mental creations  
To learn to see that the sun shines for everyone  
To learn to see that the sun shines for me.

Please Rinpoche, stay with us  
And please take more rest  
Please help me to continue your work  
May I one day be able to become what you are

*Hélène van Hoorn, April 18th 1986*





## X

# GLOSSARY

*abhidharma* (Skt.) The systematized philosophical and psychological analysis of existence that is the basis for the buddhist systems of tenets and of mind-training. As one of the branches of the buddhist canon, the *Tripitaka*, the Abhidharma corresponds to the discipline of wisdom, whereas the *sutras* correspond to the discipline of meditation and the *vinaya* to the discipline of morality.

Abidharmakosha or *Treasure of Metaphysics* An important work written by Vasubandhu, probably in the fourth century C.E., as a critical compendium of the Abhidharmic science.

Acharya Sanskrit title meaning teacher

Aggregates (Skt. *skandha*, Tib. *pungpo*) See: Five skandhas

Air (Skt. *prana*; Tib. *lung*) Also called wind or energy. In *Vajrayana* the energy serves as the mount for the various gross and subtle states of consciousness.

Akanishta (Tib. *Ogmin*) The highest heaven of the form-world, where a buddha always receives the anointment of the ultimate wisdom, i.e. achieves enlightenment, reaching there mentally from his seat of enlightenment under the bodhi-tree.

Akshobya (Tib. *Mikyöpa*) The manifestation of the aggregate of consciousness of all buddhas. He is one of the five Tathagatas or Dhyani buddhas. He has a blue-colored body. He holds the commitments of vajra, bell, mudra and reliance upon the guru.

Amitabha (Tib. *Öpame*) The manifestation of the aggregate of discrimination of all buddhas. He has a red-colored body. He is one of the five Tathagatas or Dhyani buddhas. The buddha of infinite light who presides over the Western Paradise, Sukhavati. He is associated with infinite compassion and is the teacher of Arya Avalokiteshvara. He holds the commitments of relying upon the teachings of the sutra and of the lower and higher tantras.

Amoghasiddhi (Tib. *Dönyo drupa*) The manifestation of the aggregate of compositional factors of all Buddhas. He has a green-colored body. He is one of the five Tathagatas or Dhyani buddhas. He holds the commitment of making offerings to the guru and to maintain purely all vows.

Arhat (Skt. Tib. *drachompa*) ‘Enemy destroyer’ or ‘foe destroyer’. One who has overcome the forces of karma and delusion and attained liberation from cyclic existence and thus has obtained arhatship, the spiritual ideal of Hinayana Buddhism. It is the culmination of the four stages of perfection: in succession one becomes stream-enterer, once-returner, non-returner, arhat. Sravakas (hearers) and Pratyeka Buddhas (Solitary Realisers) attain arhatship when they reach the fifth of the five paths, the path of no-more-learning (*mi.slob.lam*). The arhat has achieved nirvana, but not buddhahood, because he does not return out of compassion to teach others as the Mahayana bodhisattva does.

Arya (Skt., Tib. *pakpa*) Title meaning ‘noble one’. It indicates one who has attained the third of the five paths, the path of insight or seeing (Tib. *thong-lam*) and so through an understanding of emptiness, has gone above the world.

Aryadeva [about the second or third century C.E.] One of the great masters of Indian Buddhism. The main disciple of Nagarjuna. He wrote numerous important works of Madhyamika philosophy. Most famous is his debate with a great non-buddhist scholar.

Asanga [fourth or fifth century C.E.] Extender of the cittamatra or ‘mind-only’ school of tenets. From Maitreya, the bodhisattva of love, the lineage of extensive deeds or widespread activities (method) was transmitted to him. He brought back from Tushita the Five works of Maitreya. The lineage goes from Maitreya to Asanga, via a.o. Vasubandhu, Haribhadra, Atisha, to Tsongkhapa. His brother is Vasubandhu.

Atisha Dipamkara Sri Jnana. Also called Jowo Palden Atisha [982-1055] (Tib. *Marme dze*) A great Indian pandit, perhaps the last of the universally acclaimed masters of Indian Buddhism. He spent the last seventeen years of his life in Tibet, bringing many important teachings. Well-known is his short treatise *Light on the Path to Enlightenment* (Skt. *Bodhipathapradipa*; Tib. *Lam drön*) which points out in a concise manner the path to enlightenment.

This work became the foundation for what was to become the *Lamrim* literature. The followers of Atisha became known as the Kadampa school.

*Avadhuti* See channels.

*Avalokiteshvara* (Tib. *Chenrezig*) The great bodhisattva of compassion, chief disciple of Amitabha. Of great importance in Tibet as special protector of the religious life of the country. The Dalai Lama is considered to be an incarnation of Avalokiteshvara. In China he is (in combination with his female counterpart Tara; see: Tara) known in female form as Kwan Yin, protectress of women, children and animals.

*Avatamsaka Sutra* This vast Mahayana scripture deals with the miraculous side of the Mahayana. Its final book, the *Gandavyuha* sutra describes the development of enlightenment through tales of a pilgrimage of the central character Suddhana. The whole sutra is translated into English in three large volumes.

*Bardo* (Tib., Skt. *anubhava*) Intermediate state. The state of consciousness between death and rebirth. It begins the moment the consciousness leaves the body and ceases the moment the consciousness enters the body of the next life. One remains in that state anywhere from a moment to forty-nine days.

*Bardowa* A being in the intermediate state

*Bikshu* (Skt) (Tib. *gelong*) Buddhist mendicant monk. *Bikshuni* is the female counterpart.

*Blessing* (Tib. *jin lab*) The transformation of our mind from a negative state to a positive state, from an unhappy state to a happy state, or from a state of weakness to a state of strength through the inspiration of holy beings such as our spiritual guide, buddhas, and bodhisattvas.

*Bliss* (Tib. *dewa*) An extremely pleasurable feeling; in *maha annutara yoga* tantra the very subtle clear light mind experiencing great bliss is focused on emptiness.

*Bodhicitta* (Skt., Tib. *jangchub gyi sem*) See: Bodhimind

*Bodhimind* (Skt. *bodhicitta* Tib. *jangchub-kyi sem*) 'The awakened mind', 'the awakening mind' or 'mind of enlightenment'. Bodhimind or bodhicitta is the altruistic motivation of a bodhisattva: a mind that is directed towards the attainment of buddhahood, for the sake of all living beings; the fully open and dedicated heart. Once one has generated the bodhi-mind, one enters the first of the bodhisattva paths, the accumulation path (Tib. *tshegs.lam*). The bodhimind is of two main types: relative or conventional and absolute or ultimate. The former is also of two types: that which aspires to highest enlightenment as a means of benefitting the world, and that which engages in the practice leading to enlightenment. Ultimate bodhimind is the latter of these placed within an understanding of emptiness. In *mahanuyoga* tantra bodhimind is of two types: the red *bodhicitta*, which symbolizes female energy; and the white *bodhicitta* which symbolizes male energy. These are represented by ovum and sperm respectively. In this context buddhahood is the unification of these two forces placed within realization of mahamudra. See: Paths

*Bodhisattva* (Skt., Tib. *jangchub.sempa*) Also referred to as 'child of the Buddha', 'spiritual hero', or 'fortunate one'. A bodhisattva is a living being who has produced the spirit of enlightenment in himself and whose constant dedication, lifetime after lifetime, is to attain the unexcelled, perfect enlightenment of buddhahood for the sake of all living beings. The term bodhisattva refers to those at many levels: from those who have generated aspiration to enlightenment for the first time to those who have actually entered the bodhisattva path, which is developed through the ten stages (Skt. *bhumis*) and culminates in enlightenment, the attainment of buddhahood. Those who have embarked on the path but have not yet gained direct perception of the meaning of emptiness are called ordinary bodhisattvas; those who have attained the path of seeing and can in meditation directly perceive emptiness are called extra-ordinary or superior bodhisattvas or *arya* bodhisattvas.

*Bodhisattva vows*. Eighteen root vows and forty-six branch vows, which are taken in order to develop *bodhicitta*.

*Bodies of a buddha* See: Kaya

*Brahma* Creator-lord of a universe, there beings as many as there are universes, whose number is incalculable. Hence, in Buddhist belief, a title of a deity who has attained supremacy in a particular universe, rather than a personal name. A king of the gods who dwells in the form Realm. At the time of Buddha Shakyamuni, Indra and Brahma requested Buddha to turn the wheel of dharma for the sake of all sentient beings.

*Buddha* (Skt., Tib. *sanggye*) Lit. 'awakened one'. Title of one who has attained the highest attainment for a living being. It refers to one who has completely purified (*sang*) all the defilements, the two obscurations, and completely expanded (*gye*) or perfected his mind to encompass all excellences and knowledges. A fully enlightened being is perfect in omniscience and compassion. Every being has the potential to become a completely enlightened buddha. There are countless buddhas. This eon is to have one thousand buddhas. Shakyamuni Buddha is the fourth buddha in this eon. The first three were Krakuchchanda, Kanakamuni and Kashyapa. The fifth buddha will be Maitreya, the eleventh buddha is predicted to be Je Tsongkhapa and as the last one of the thousand of this eon Roca is mentioned. Also see: Buddha Shakyamuni.

*Buddha nature* Our potential to attain full enlightenment. Specifically, it is the ultimate nature of the mind. Every living being has buddha nature. Buddha nature and buddha seed are synonyms. Rinpoche does not speak about it in this lamrim, but often speaks about it in public talks. See: Gelek Rinpoche *Love and compassion*, chapter: In the moment from habit to awareness and Gelek Rinpoche, *Transforming negativity into positive living*, the first few talks.

Buddha's bodies (Skt. *kaya*; Tib. *ku*) There are several divisions. If three kayas: (1) *dharmakaya* or truth-body or ultimate body, (2) *sambhogakaya* or enjoyment-body or beatific body, (3) *nirmanakaya* or emanation-body or incarnational body. The last two ones together are called form-body or *rupa-kaya*. If two kayas: (1) truth-body or *dharmakaya* and (2) form-body or *rupakaya*. If four kayas: truth-body divided into (1) *svabhavikakaya* or nature-body and (2) *jnanakaya* or wisdom-body; the form-body divided into (3) *sambhogakaya* or enjoyment-body and (4) *nirmanakaya* or emanation-body.

Buddhadharma Buddha's teachings and the inner realizations attained by practicing them.

Buddhahood See: Enlightenment

Bumpa (Tib.) vase. In initiations two kinds are used: the activity vase with spout and the initiation vase without spout.

Chakrasamvara See Heruka Chakrasamvara

Chakra (Skt; Tib. *tsa kor*) Energy-wheel; a focal point of energy along the central channel upon which one's concentration is directed, especially during the completion stage of *annutara yoga tantra*. Meditating on these points can cause the inner winds to enter the central channel.

Chandragomin [seventh century] Belonged to the Cittamatra school of tenets, the Mind-Only school or the Idealists. He had a long-lasting famous debate with Candrakirti representing the Madhyamaka, the Middle Way philosophy of Nagarjuna.

Chandrakirti [ca. sixth-seventh century C.E.] The most important madhyamika philosopher after Nagarjuna and Aryadeva. He is regarded the 'ultimate' disciple of Nagarjuna as he is the elucidator of the essence of Nagarjuna's message. He wrote famous commentaries on Nagarjuna's work, such as *Guide to the Middle Way* (Skt. *Madhyamikavata*). So he is considered one of the highest authorities on the subject of the profound nature of reality. He had a long-lasting famous debate with Chandragomin.

Channels (Skt. *nadi* Tib. *tse*) A constituent of the vajra body through which energy-winds and drops flow. In the body there are three main channels: the central channel (Skt. *avadhuti*, *shushumma*; Tib. *uma*), the major energy channel of the vajra body; the right channel (Tib. *roma*) and the left channel (Tib. *kyangma*). From the tip of the sex organ up to the top of the head it is very straight, but from there it bends down in an arch and terminates between the two eyebrows. It is located exactly midway between the right and left halves of the body but it is closer to the back than to the front. It is visualized greenish-bluish from the outside, more reddish from the inside. Immediately to either side of the central channel are the right and left channels. The right channel is visualized red and the left one white.

Cittamatra The Cittamatra or Mind-only school is one of the two Mahayana schools of buddhist tenets, the other being the Madhyamika School. Cittamatra means 'mind only'. The cittamatra, also known as Yogacara, Mahayana system of tenets developed by Asanga and his brother Vasubandhu. According to this school all phenomena are the same nature as the mind that apprehends them. Dependent phenomena are truly existent but they do not exist external to the mind.

Clear light (Tib. *ösel*) The subtlest level of mind, which becomes manifest only when all the gross minds have ceased their active functions. This state is experienced by ordinary beings naturally at the time of death, though it may not be and cannot be recognised by those not trained to do so. With the mind of clear light -and the pure illusory body- the full awakening of buddhahood can be achieved. The clear light is potentially with everyone; its full development in order to sustain the spiritual path is aimed at in highest tantra yoga practice.

Commitment being (Skt. *samaya sattva* Tib. *damtsik sempa*) A visualized buddha or ourselves visualized as a buddha. Also called symbolic being.

Commitments (Skt. *samaya*, Tib. *dam tsik*) Promises and pledges taken when engaging in certain spiritual practices.

Compassion (Skt. *karuna*) The wish to free others from their suffering. See: Great compassion.

Completion Stage (Tib. *dzok rim*) The last one of the two main stages of *maha-annutara-yoga-tantra*, the other one being the generation stage, during which control is gained over the *vajra* body.

Concentration (Skt. *samadhi*, Tib. *ting 'dzin*) The ability to focus the mind single-pointedly on any chosen object of meditation and keep it there. Concentration meditation is one of the two main forms of meditation, the other one being analytical meditation.

Creation stage See development stage

Cyclic existence See: Samsara

Dakas and dakinis (Skt., Tib. *kadro* and *kadroma*) Male and female 'sky-goers'; beings who help arouse blissful energy in a qualified tantric practitioner.

Dalai Lama Spiritual and temporal leader of Tibet, recognized as the human embodiment of Avalokiteshvara, the buddha of compassion. The current Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, was born in 1935 and is the fourteenth of his line. The first Dalai Lama lived in the fifteenth century. The name *dalai lama* first came up at the time of the Third Dalai Lama, Gyalwa Sonam Gyatso, by whose learnedness and spirituality the mongol khan was so impressed that he called him *dalai*, mongolian for ocean. So the name means: ocean of wisdom.

Dedication Refers to the bodhisattva's constant mindfulness of the fact that all his actions of whatever form contribute to his purpose of attaining enlightenment for the sake of himself and others, i.e. his conscious

dedicating, offering, giving away of the merit that comes from any virtuous actions as he eschews immediate reward in favour of ultimate enlightenment.

Deity See yidam

Demon (Skt. *mara*) A demon is anything that obstructs the attainment of liberation or enlightenment. There are four principal types of demon: the demon of the delusions (*kleshamara*), the demon of the contaminated aggregates (*skandhamara*), the demon of death (*mrtumara*) and the heavenly demons (*devaputramara*). Of these, only the last are actual sentient beings. The principal Devaputra demon is wrathful Ishvara, the highest of the desire-realm gods who inhabits the Land Controlling Others' Emanations. Buddha is called a 'conqueror' because he has conquered all four types of demon. Also see: Ishvara. Also see: Mara

Dependent existence or interdependent origination or dependent arising or interdependent relationship. (*pratityasamutpada*) Any phenomenon that exists in dependence upon other phenomena is a dependent-related phenomenon. All phenomena are dependent-related because all phenomena depend upon their parts. Sometimes dependent-related is distinguished from dependent-arising with the latter meaning arising in dependence upon causes and conditions. However, the two terms are often used interchangeably.

Desire Realm See: Realms

Desire Can be either negative, like in the meaning of attachment to worldly pleasures, or positive, in the meaning of striving for enlightenment.

Determination to be free The attitude of wishing to leave behind the sufferings of *samsara* and their cause and to attain instead the peace of *nirvana* or the full enlightenment of buddhahood. Also referred to as: Renunciation.

Development stage (Tib. *kye rim*) Also called generation stage or creation stage. The first of the two main stages of *maha-annutara-yoga-tantra* during which one cultivates the clear appearance and divine pride of one's chosen meditational deity. The second stage is called the completion stage or perfection stage.

Dharma Protectors (Skt. *dharmapalas*; Tib. *chö kyong*) Manifestations of buddhas or bodhisattvas whose main function is to eliminate obstacles and to gather all necessary conditions for pure dharma practitioners.

Dharmadhatu (Skt.) Realm of true reality. The ultimate reality underlying phenomena; that is, their non-existence as intrinsic natures, or emptiness.

Dharmakaya (Skt Tib. *chö ku*.) Truth Body. The mind of a fully enlightened being, free of all coverings, remaining meditatively absorbed in the direct perception of emptiness while simultaneously cognizing all phenomena. See: Kaya.

Dharmakirti There are two Dharmakirtis. One is of Suvarnavipa [Sumatra Indonesia] Serlingpa ca. 1020, the teacher of Atisha. The other one is a famous philosopher of the beginning of the seventh century C.E.

Divine pride (Tib. *hla-yi-nga-gyel*) A non-deluded pride that regards oneself as a deity and one's environments and enjoyments as those of the Deity. It is the antidote to ordinary conceptions.

Dorje See Vajra

Dorje Chang (Tib.) See Vajradhara

Drepung Monastery One of the three main monasteries of the Gelugpa tradition. The monastery in which the early Dalai Lamas were educated. Tibet's largest monastery; at the time of the Chinese invasion in the 1950's it housed more than ten thousand monks. The monastery Ghelek Rimpoche lived in; he belonged to Drepung Loseling. The other two main monasteries are Ganden and Sera.

Drom Rinpoche or Dromtönpa [1004-1064] Main disciple of Atisha, lay person, founder of the Kadampa lineage.

Drops (Skt. *bindu*; Tib. *tigle*) A constituent of the vajra body used in the generation of great bliss; of two types, the red drops are received from one's mother and the white drops from one's father at conception. Also see Indestructible drop

Dualistic view Ignorant view characteristic of the unenlightened mind in which all things are falsely conceived to have concrete self-existence. To such a view the appearance of an object is mixed with the false image of its being independent or self-existent, thereby leading to further dualistic views concerning subject and object, self and other, this and that, etc.

Dzok rim See Completion stage

Eight worldly dharmas Eight worldly concerns or eight childish attitudes:

- 1) gain, finding, obtaining, profit, acquirement. 2) loss, not-finding, disappointment, disprofit, damage.
- 3) fame, glory, celebrity, reputation. 4) dishonour, disgrace, infamy, disrepute,
- 5) praise, laud, commendation, renown. 6) blame, abuse, reproach, reproof, censure, reviling, degradation.
- 7) well-being, happiness, prosperity, pleasure. [Skt. *sukha*] 8) misery, pain, distress, trouble [Skt. *dukha*].

Emptiness (Skt. *shunyata*, Tib. *tong pa nyi*) The absence of the illusion of the inherent existence of people and things, upon realizing which one understands ultimate truth. Voidness, specifically the emptiness of absolute substance, of truth, of identity, of intrinsic reality, of self or inherent existence of all persons and things in the relative world.

Enlightenment (Tib. *jangchub*) Full awakening, buddhahood. The ultimate goal of Buddhist practice, attained when all limitations have been removed from the mind and all one's positive potential has been realized; a state characterized by unlimited compassion, skill and wisdom.

- Eon (Skt. *kalpa*) A large period of time, described as the time it takes a dove to exhaust a mountain of grain the size of the Mount Everest by removing one grain every thousand years.
- Equanimity (Skt. *upeksha*, Tib. *tangnyom*) As the basis for compassion and love an unbiased state of mind affected by neither attachment nor aversion towards others. In meditation a balanced state of mind upset by neither excitement nor sinking.
- Eternalisme or existentialism (Tib. *tak-ta*) Belief in an unchanging ego or self-nature in either persons or phenomena. One of the two extremes to be avoided; the opposite of nihilism.
- Father tantra: The tantras that emphasize the practice of the illusion body, such as Guhyasamaja.
- Field of Merit (Tib. *tsok ching*) In general a field of merit is any basis on which one can collect merit, like a field of earth is the basis on which you can grow crops, the crops depending on the field. A supreme field for accumulating merit are the holy beings, to which we can offer the seven limbs of our practice, the holy beings acting as a field in which we plant and nourish our seeds of virtue.
- Five buddhas There are five main buddha families or castes, the families of Vairocana, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha, Amogasiddhi and Akshobya. They are also called the five Dhyani buddhas or the five Tathagatas. They represent the five purified aggregates or skandhas, the aggregate of form, feeling, discrimination, formative elements or volition and consciousness respectively. And the five exalted wisdoms: the mirror-like wisdom, wisdom of equality, wisdom of individuality or discrimination, wisdom of accomplishing activities, wisdom of *dharmadhatu* (Skt.) or true nature. respectively.
- Five paths According to dharma a path is necessarily an internal path. There are mundane and supramundane paths. A supramundane path is any path leading to liberation or enlightenment, for example, the realizations of renunciation, bodhicitta and the correct view of emptiness. Strictly speaking only superior beings, *aryas*, possess supramundane paths. The Tibetan word for these paths is *salam*, meaning 'earth paths'. They are called 'earth' because each stage is a foundation of wisdom which gives support to all further growth of insight. They are called 'paths' because these internal paths can lead us to our ultimate destination, full enlightenment. The five paths are: 1. path of merit or path of accumulation (*tsog-lam*); 2. path of preparation (*jor-lam*); 3. path of seeing or path of insight (*tong-lam*); 4. path of meditation (*gom-lam*); 5. path of no-more-learning. The first two paths are the paths of ordinary bodhisattvas, the following two paths are the paths of arya bodhisattvas or superior bodhisattvas, on the fifth path the bodhisattva has become a buddha. The paths in Hinayana carry the same name but differ in the practice.
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- Five *skandhas*. (Skr; Tib. *pungpo*) Aggregates. Literally meaning 'pile' or 'heap' which has the connotation of an utter lack of internal structure. The body-mind organism is made up of innumerable elementary constituents, called 'dharma's', which are grouped into five. The five compulsive aggregates are the five basic constituents of psycho-physical existence, of great importance as a scheme for introspective meditation in the abhidharma. They are: (1) matter or form (Skt. *rupa*), (2) feeling or sensation (Skt. *vedana*), (3) perception or discernment or discrimination or intellect -the sense of verbal, conceptual intelligence (Skt. *samjna*), (4) volition, motivation, habits, compositional factors, formative elements or conditioned activities (Skt. *samskara*) and (5) consciousness or primary mind or pure awareness (Skt. *vijnana*). Associated together they make up most living beings.
- Five wisdoms The five wisdoms of a Buddha: the mirror-like wisdom, the wisdom of equality, the wisdom of individual analysis, the wisdom of accomplishing activities, and the wisdom of *dharmadhatu*, i.e. the wisdom of the dharma sphere.
- Foe destroyer See: Arhat
- Form realm See: Realms
- Formless realm see: Realms
- Four activities. Common attainments are of four principal types: pacifying attainments (the ability to purify negativity, overcome obstacles, and cure sickness), increasing attainments (the ability to increase dharma realizations, merit, life span, and wealth), controlling attainments (the ability to control one's own and others' minds and actions), and wrathful attainments (the ability to use wrathful actions where appropriate to benefit others). Supreme attainments are the special realizations of a Buddha.
- Four classes or levels of tantra Successively *Kriya* tantra (Skt.; Tib. *dya gyu*) which uses many external rituals such as washing etc.; *charya* tantra (Skt.; Tib. *chö gyu*) which balances outer methods with inner ones; *yoga* tantra (Skt.; Tib. *neljor gyu*) which emphasizes internal methods; *maha anuttara yoga* tantra (Skt.; Tib. *lama me gyu*), which exclusively relies upon internal methods.

Four Mindfulnesses 1. Mindfulness of the body, 2. Mindfulness of feelings [sensations], 3. Mindfulness of the mind or awareness, 4. Mindfulness of phenomena [contents of thoughts].

Four Noble Truths (skr. *catuh-arya-satya*, Tib. *pakpei denpa zhi*) 1. The truth of suffering; 2. The truth of the causes of suffering. 3. The truth of the cessation of suffering. 4. The truth of the path to the cessation of suffering. They are called 'noble' truths because they are supreme objects of meditation. Through meditation on these four objects we can realize ultimate truth directly and thus become a noble, or superior being.

Four purities 1) pure field, i.e. seeing all surroundings as Vajrayogini's mandala; 2) pure retinue or pure activities, i.e. the pure activities of helping sentient beings; 3) seeing one's body as the pure body of the deity, i.e. Vajrayogini; 4) pure enjoyments, i.e. enjoying everything as a pure form.

Four schools of tenets Four philosophical views taught by Buddha according to the inclinations and dispositions of his disciples. They are the Vaibhasika, Sautantrika, Cittamatra and Madhyamika tenets. They are studied in sequence, the lower tenets being the means by which the higher tenets are understood. The first two are Hinayana tenets and the second two are Mahayana tenets.

Four ways of birth Spontaneous birth, birth from moisture, birth from an egg, birth from a womb

Four ways of ripening others mind or four ways of attraction: 1. Showing generosity. 2. Speaking in a kind and loving manner. 3. Working for the benefit of others. 4. Practicing what one preaches.

Ganden Kagyu. See Gelugpa

*Ganden Lha Gyema* A short guru-yoga practice. *Ganden* means: the land of joy (Tushita), *lha* means: deities, *gyema* is hundreds or many.

Gelugpa The tradition of Tibetan Buddhism established by Je Tsongkhapa as a fusion of older sects, sometimes named Ganden Kagyu, also known as the New Kadam. The name Gelug means: wholesome way or: virtuous tradition. The three great Gelug monasteries are Ganden, Drepung and Sera. The other main traditions of Tibetan Buddhism are the Nyingma who go back to Guru Padmasambhava, Sakya going back to Sakya Pandita, and the Kagyu going back to Marpa-Milarepa-Gampopa.

Generation stage (*skyes rim*) Also called development stage. The first of the two main stages of *maha-annutara-yoga-tantra* during which one cultivates the clear appearance and divine pride of one's chosen meditational deity. The second stage is called the completion stage.

Great compassion (Skt. *mahakaruna*, Tib. *nyingje chenpo*) The firm and spontaneous resolve to separate all sentient beings without exception from the suffering of cyclic existence. It refers to one of the two central qualities of a buddha or a high bodhisattva: his feeling born of the wish for all living beings to be free of suffering and to attain the supreme happiness. This great compassion has nothing to do with any sentimental emotions such as 'Oh, the poor creatures, how they are suffering'. On the contrary great compassion is accompanied by the clear awareness that ultimately there are no such things as living beings, sufferings etc. Thus it is an unlimited sensitivity that does not entertain any dualistic notion of subject and object.

Great love (Skt. *mahamaitri*, Tib. *jampa chenpo*) The firm and spontaneous resolve to endow all sentient beings without exception with the real, lasting happiness that knows no suffering.

Guhyasamaja (Tib. *Sangwa dupa*) One of the three major Gelugpa yidams, the other two being Heruka and Yamantaka.

Gungtang Jampelyang (*Gung tang 'Jam dpal dbyangs*) (1762-1823) Also known as Guntangba Konchog Tenpay Dronme (ordination name). Well-known for his eloquent spiritual poetry and philosophical work.

*Guru Yoga* (Skt.) The fundamental tantric practice whereby one's guru is seen as (a) identical with the buddhas, (b) one's personal meditational deity and (c) the essential nature of one's own mind.

Gyeltsab Je, Gyeltsab Dharma Rinchen (1364-1432) The elder one of the two main disciples of Tsongkhapa.

Hearer (Skt. *śrāvaka*, Tib. *tsuddo*) Hearers are disciples in Hinayana. Literally: 'those who listen to the teachings'. Their goal is *nirvana*, liberation or arhatship to be reached along the five paths of a hearer. They are of eight types according to the level of delusions they have abandoned: approaching the state of a stream-enterer, abiding in it; approaching the state of a once-returner, abiding in it; approaching the state of a never returner, abiding in it; approaching the state of a foe-destroyer, abiding in it. A stream-enterer is on the path of seeing and will never again be reborn in the three lower realms, a once-returner will return to the desire realm only once more, and a never returner will never again return to the desire realm.

*Heart Sutra* The essence of wisdom sutra. Of the several perfection of wisdom (Skt. *Prajnaparamita*) sutras a very condensed and famous one.

Heruka Chakrasamvara - the Wrathful Lord of the Wheel of Supreme Bliss - is one of the major meditational deities of the mother tantras, the principal sources explaining the methods for realizing the clear light. This deity is sometimes referred to as Samvara and merely as Heruka, though this latter term can be applied in general to all deities of highest yoga tantra.

High State Fortunate rebirth

Highest yoga tantra (Skt. *maha-anu-yoga tantra*) The fourth and supreme division of tantric practice, consisting of generation and completion stages, capable of leading the practitioner to full enlightenment within one lifetime.

- Hinayana. Sanskrit term for 'Lesser Vehicle'. The Hinayana goal is to attain merely one's own liberation from suffering by completely abandoning delusions.
- Hungry ghosts (skr. *preta*) Literally 'departed'. There are 500 kinds of hungry ghosts, including demonic ones that cause certain types of accidents, spirits of the departed, spirits that enter and take possessions of human bodies, and overpowering ghosts kings that cause certain forms of madness. Hungry ghosts, normally invisible to human beings, are one of the six classes of samsaric beings.
- I or Self or Ego (Skt. *atman*, Tib. *nga*) Buddhism does not accept the existence of an independent, self-existent, unchanging ego or self, because if such were to exist, a person would be unchanging and would be unable to purify himself of fettering passions and attain buddhahood. Rinpoche often refers to this one as 'I rinpoche', 'the Big Boss inside', 'Dictator I'. There is acceptance of a relative, impermanent, changeable, conscious-entity, which is the continuation of life, linking one's former life to this life, and this life to future lives.
- Ignorance (skr. *avidya* Tib. *marikpa*) The root cause of cyclic existence; not knowing the way things actually are and misconstruing them to be permanent, satisfactory and inherently existent. The delusions that gives rise to all other delusions and the karma they motivate. Ignorance can be eradicated by the wisdom of emptiness.
- Illusion body or illusory body (skr. *maya-kaya* Tib. *gyu lu*) A subtle bodily form generated through the practice of the completion stage of highest yoga tantra. When a practitioner of highest yoga tantra rises from the meditation of the isolated mind of ultimate example clear light he or she attains a body that is not the same as his or her ordinary physical body. This new body is the illusory body. It has the same appearance as the body of the personal yidam of generation stage, except that it is white in color. It can be perceived only by those who have already attained an illusory body.
- Imprint There are two main types of imprint: karmic imprints and imprints of delusions. A karmic imprint is an imprint left in the mind by an action. It is a potentiality for a future experience. The imprints of the delusions are the imprints left in the mind after the delusion has been abandoned. They are a residual contamination that prevent direct cognition of all phenomena. Thus they are called 'obstructions to knowing' or 'obstructions to omniscience'. They are abandoned on the last three grounds or *bhumis* of the Mahayana path of meditation.
- Indestructible drop The most subtle drop, formed from the very subtle red and white drops received from the parents at conception and located at the heart *chakra*. At death the red and white drops separate and the very subtle mind and its mounting wind or most subtle energy are freed to travel to the next life.
- Indra A desire-realm god who abides in the Land of the Thirty-three heavens. At the time of Buddha Shakyamuni, Indra and Brahma requested Buddha to turn the wheel of dharma for the sake of all sentient beings.
- Inherent existence (Skt. *svabhava-siddhi*. Tib. *rangshin gyi druppa*) The illusion that people and things exist by virtue of their own essential characteristics alone, independently of any conditioning factors. Ignorantly assenting to this illusion is the basis for cyclic existence; wisely dispelling it, the basis for enlightenment and liberation. Inherently existent, truly existent, existence from its own side or existent from its own true nature are interchangeable terms. Also see: Self-existence. Also see: Emptiness
- Initiation or empowerment (Skt. *abisheka*; Tib. *wang*) Transmission received from a tantric master allowing a disciple to engage in the practices of a particular meditational deity.
- Jangchub See: Enlightenment
- Kadampa masters Literally 'The Word-Instructed'. The Kadampa lineage was founded in the eleventh century by the teacher Drom, Atisha's chief disciple. The Kadampa masters carry the lineage of Atisha's teaching; before Tsongkhapa the tradition is called old kadam, after that time the tradition is known as new kadam. The teachings on training the mind, *lojong*, are the main teachings of the kadam tradition.
- Kagyu One of the main Tibetan buddhist traditions, the other ones being Gelugpa, Nyingma and Sakya. In the lineage of the kagyu are well-known Marpa, Milarepa, Gampopa and Trungpa Rinpoche.
- Kalachakra (Skt., Tib. *Dukor*) Literally 'cycle of time'. Male meditational deity of highest yoga tantra whose practice contains instructions in medicine, astronomy etc. as well as the path to enlightenment.
- Kanjur (Skt.) Literally 'translation of (Buddha's) words'. The Tibetan collection of the Tripitaka: the sutras, the vinaya, and the abhidharma, in one hundred and eight volumes. The collection of commentaries is called Tanjur.
- Karma (Skt.; Tib. *le*) Deeds. Term referring to actions and their effects. Through the force of intention we perform actions with our body, speech, and mind, and all of these actions produce effects. The effect of virtuous actions is happiness and the effect of negative actions is suffering
- Karuna (Skt.) Compassion
- Kaya (*sku*) 'Body' or aspect of a buddha. There are several divisions: in two, three, four or five kayas. Three kayas: (1) *dharmakaya* or truth-body or ultimate body, (2) *sambhogakaya* or enjoyment-body or beatific body, (3) *nirmanakaya* or emanation-body or incarnation body. The last two ones together are called form-body or *rupa-kaya*. There are also other divisions: Two kayas: (1) truth-body or *dharmakaya* and (2) form-body or *rupakaya*. Four kayas: truth-body divided into (1) *svabhavikakaya* or nature-body and (2) *jnanakaya* or wisdom-body; the form-body divided into (3) *sambhogakaya* or enjoyment-body and (4) *nirmanakaya* or emanation-body. Five kayas: (1) *dharmakaya* or truth-body divided into (2) *svabhavikakaya* or nature-body and (3) *jnanakaya* or wisdom-body, (4) *sambhogakaya* or enjoyment-body and (5) *nirmanakaya* or emanation-body. The *nirmanakaya*, the person or

personality of a buddha, is of three kinds: a supreme manifestation like Buddha Shakyamuni; a manifestation in the form of a master craftsman like e.g. Buddha teaching as musician; the manifestation as host in the gods realms like e.g. Maitreya in Tushita now.

Kedrub Je (1385-1438) The younger one of the two heart disciples of Tsongkhapa. The other heart-disciple is Gyeltsab Je. (1364-1432).

Klesha See: Delusion

Kye rim See Development stage

Labrang (Tib.) Institute of a reincarnated lama

Lam Rim (Tib.) Stages on the spiritual path to enlightenment in sutrayana. In tantrayana the stages of the path are called *Nag Rim*.

Lhagtong (Tib., Skt. *vipasyana*) Special or penetrative insight. The meditative understanding of impermanence, selflessness and emptiness that overcomes ignorance and leads to liberation.

Liberation (Skt. *moksha*, Tib. *tharpa*) Release from the bondage of *samsara*, cyclic existence. Freedom from compulsive karmic patterns and the mental and para-mental obscurations.

Ling Rinpoche [1903-1983] One of the two main tutors of His Holiness Dalai Lama XIV. 97th Throne holder of Tsongkhapa. Abbot of the Upper Tantric College. In this function he was the successor of the previous incarnation of Gelek Rinpoche. Disciple of Pabongka Rinpoche, One of the main teachers of Gelek Rinpoche.

Lung (Tib.) Air, energy, wind; oral transmission.

Madhyamika (Skt.; Tib. *Umapa*) One of the two main schools of Mahayana tenets. A system of analysis founded by Nagarjuna, based on the *Perfection of Wisdom* sutras of Shakyamuni buddha, considered to be the supreme presentation of the wisdom of emptiness. There are two divisions of this school, Madhyamika-Svatantrika and Madhyamika-Prasangika, of which the latter is Buddha's final view.

Maha anu yoga tantra (Skt) See Highest yoga tantra

Mahamudra. (Skt., Tib. *phyag-rgya-chen-po*). Literally 'great seal.' It refers to the nature of all phenomena. (...) It also refers to sophisticated Buddhist systems of meditation and practice to realize this great sealing nature. The distinctive characteristic of these techniques [in sutra and tantra] is to see these nature by focusing on mind itself and discovering the relationship between mind and reality. (Dalai Lama, *The Gelug/Kagyü tradition of Mahamudra*, pg. 19).

Mahasiddha Sanskrit term for 'greatly accomplished one'. Used to refer to Yogis with high attainments.

Mahayana (Skt., Tib. *tegchen*) 'The great vehicle', called 'great' because it carries all living beings to enlightenment or buddhahood. It is distinguished from Hinayana, which only carries each person who rides on it to their own personal liberation. It is the vehicle in which refuge is taken in the scriptures revealed after Buddha's death (and propagated by masters such as Nagarjuna, Asanga, etc.), as well as in the earlier scriptures accepted by Hinayana. Also, unlike the Hinayana, whose basis is renunciation, the basis of the Mahayana is great compassion; and its aim, rather than personal nirvana, is fully omniscient buddhahood. The practises of a *bodhisattva*. Mahayana includes both the vehicle of perfections (*paramitayana*) and *Vajrayana*

Maitreya (Tib. *Jampa*) The embodiment of the loving-kindness of all the Buddhas. At the time of Buddha Shakyamuni he manifested as a Bodhisattva disciple. In the future he will manifest as the fifth universal Buddha.

Mala (Tib.) Rosary.

Mandala (Skt.) A circular diagram symbolic of the entire universe. The abode of a meditational deity, understood as the emanation of the wisdom of that deity. Figuratively, one's personal surroundings seen as a reflection of one's state of mind.

Manjushri (Tib. *Jampelyang*) Male meditational deity. The eternally youthful crown prince, the embodiment of the wisdom of all enlightened beings. From Manjushri the lineage of the profound view of emptiness was handed down to Nagarjuna. Manjushri incarnated in human form is called Manjunatha ('*Jam mgon*'), an epithet for Tsongkhapa.

Mantra (Skt.; Tib. *ngak*) Literally, 'mind protection'. Sanskrit syllables recited in conjunction with the practice of a particular meditational deity and embodying the qualities of that deity. Mantra protects the mind from ordinary appearances and conceptions.

Mantrayana (Skt.) The vehicle of mantras; a synonym for Vajrayana.

Mara see: Demon

Marpa Lotsawa [1012-1092] A great Tibetan yogi of the eleventh and twelfth century, disciple of Naropa and teacher of Milarepa. Founder of the Kagyu tradition of Tibetan buddhism.

Meditation skr. *bhavana*, Tib. *gom*) Literally 'getting used to'. The process of controlling, training and transforming the mind that leads one to liberation and enlightenment. The process of becoming thoroughly familiar with beneficial states of mind through both analytical investigation and single-pointed concentration.

Meditational deity (Tib. *vidam*) See: Yidam.

Merit The wholesome tendencies implanted in the mind as a result of committing skillful actions. That positive wholesome tendencies or energy has the power to create happiness and good qualities.



**Method** Any spiritual path that functions to ripen our buddha seed, i.e. our growing buddha nature. Training in renunciation, compassion, and bodhicitta are examples of method practices.

**Middle way** See *Madhyamika*.

**Migtsema** Originally a hymn on Rendawa made by Tsongkhapa. Rendawa (1349-1412), one of the most important teachers of Tsongkhapa belonged to the Sakya school. Rendawa reversed the praise into a hymn on Tsongkhapa. The relation between Tsongkhapa and Rendawa existed over many generations and on a personal footing in which the teacher also learnt from his student.

**Milarepa, Jetsun (1040-1123)** A Tibetan yogi who achieved buddhahood in one lifetime. He was the foremost disciple of Marpa, famous for his intense practice, devotion to his guru attainment of enlightenment and his many songs of spiritual realization. His biography is a favorite example of hardship undertaken in order to attain enlightenment.

**Mind** Tib. *shepa*) That which is clarity and cognizes.

**Mindstream** (Tib. *gyu*) Personal continuum

**Mother tantra.** The tantras that emphasize the practice of clear light, such as Heruka and Hevajra.

**Mudra** (Skt.; Tib. *chakgya*) Generally, the Sanskrit word for 'seal', as in Mahamudra, the 'Great seal'. More specifically, 'mudra' is used to refer to a consort, as in 'action mudra' or 'wisdom mudra', and to hand gestures used in Tantric rituals.

**Nada** Squiggle; last part of a seed-syllable that dissolves.

**Nadis** See: Channels

**Nagarjuna** Saint, scholar and mystic of Buddhist India, born about four hundred years after the Buddha, who revived the Mahayana in the first century AD by bringing to light the teachings on the *Perfection of Wisdom*, the lineage of wisdom, according to the myth handed over to him by the *nagas*. He is author of the fundamental Madhyamika work and founder of the Madhyamika or Middle Way school of tenets. He is said to have lived five hundred sixty years due to his alchemical ability.

**Nalanda** North Indian monastic university; one of the major sources of the tantric lineages that spread to Tibet. The other famous university was Vikramalashila.

**Naropa** Eleventh century Indian *mahasiddha* who transmitted many profound tantric lineages, including those of Heruka Chakrasamvara and Vajrayogini. Disciple of Tilopa and guru of Marpa.

**Nectar** (Skt. *amrita*; Tib. *dütsi*) Transcendental substance emanated by enlightened deities, which confers such benefits as purification, realizations, long life etc. according to the type.

**Ngondro** See: Preliminary practices

**Nihilism** (Tib. *che-ta*) Belief that phenomena are completely non-existent. One of the extremes to be avoided; the opposite is eternalism.

**Nine mixings** The main methods for taking ordinary death, bardo and rebirth as the paths to the three kayas of a buddha. These nine are extensively explained in the texts of the *Guhyasamaja tantra*. The nine mixings make up one of the essential practices of the completion stage meditation.

**Nirmanakaya** (Skt.; Tib. *tul ku*) Emanation body. Form in which the enlightened mind appears in order to benefit ordinary beings.

**Nirvana** (Skt., Tib. *nyangde*) The unconditional peace that is realized through becoming liberated from cyclic existence. Generally refers to the Hinayana attainment of arhatship, or personal liberation from samsara, but can also include full buddhahood. In the former case, delusions and their instincts are destroyed, giving freedom from cyclic compulsions; in the latter, the innate tendency of the mind to grasp at inherent existence is destroyed as well, granting omniscience.

**Obscurations** Two classes of obscurations are generally distinguished, which obstructs one's attainment of liberation from cyclic existence [*klesha-varana*], and obstructions to omniscience, which must be removed to gain omniscience or buddhahood [*jñāna-varana*]. A Mahayana practitioner destroys both; a Hinayana practitioner destroys only the former.

**Ogmin** See Akanishta.

**Omniscience** This refers to the gnosis of the Buddha, with which there is nothing he does not know. However, 'everything' here is specifically everything about the source of the predicament of worldly life and the way of transcendence of that world through liberation. 'Everything' does not refer to any sort of ultimate totality, since a totality can only be relative, i.e. a totality within a particular frame of reference. Thus, as Dharmakirti has remarked, 'It is not a question of the Buddha's knowing the number of fish in the ocean' The Buddha's omniscience, rather, knows how to develop and liberate any fish in any ocean, as well as all other living beings.

**Oral Transmission** (Tib. *lung*) The passing of a pure, unbroken oral lineage. All the root texts and their commentaries have been passed in a pure, unbroken lineage from teachers to disciples from the time of Buddha down to the present day. It is customary at the end of a teaching for the teacher to recite all the words of the text, just as he heard them from his own teacher. A disciple is not considered to have received a teaching until he or she has heard all the words from the mouth of a qualified spiritual guide. A teaching that has been received in this way is completely pure and it carries the blessings of all the lineage gurus who transmitted the same teaching in the past.

**Pabongka Rinpoche** Je Pabongkhapa Vajradhara Dechen Pael Zangpa or Pabongka Rinpoche Jampa Tenzin Trinley Gyatso [1878-1941] Addressed as Dechen Nyingpo. He was an emanation of the great scholar Jankya Rolpai Dorje [1717-1786]. He is regarded the most influential Gelugpa teacher of this century. He was the root-guru of both the Senior and Junior Tutors [Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche and Kyabje Ling Rinpoche] of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and holder of many sutra and secret mantra lineages.

**Pandit** Scholar. Maha-pandit means great scholar. The word is here normally used for the earlier buddhist scholars in India, like Nagarjuna, Asanga and so and forth.

**Paramitas** (Skt., Tib. *paroltuchinpa*) See: Six paramitas.

**Parinirvana** A more emphatic term for nirvana, when it is used in reference to the apparent passing away of a physical body of a buddha.

**Paths** See: Five paths.

**Phowa** See Transference of consciousness

**Prajnaparamita Sutra** (Skt.; Tib. *par chin*) Perfection of Wisdom sutra. The scripture with those teachings of Shakyamuni buddha in which the transcendental wisdom, the wisdom of emptiness and the path of the bodhisattva are set forth. There are nineteen versions of different lengths, ranging from the *Heart Scripture* of a few pages to the large one of *Hundred-Thousand* stanzas

**Prajnaparamita** (Skt.) Perfection of wisdom. Transcendental wisdom, being the profound non-dual understanding of the ultimate reality, or the voidness, or relativity, of all things. Personified as a goddess, she is worshipped as the 'Mother of all buddhas' (*Sarvajinamata*)

**Prasangika** The sub-school of the madhyamika philosophical school founded by Buddhapalita and further developed by Candrakirti.

**Pratyeka buddha** See: Solitary Realizer.

**Preliminaries.** Preliminary practices (Tib. *ngondro*); the meditations designed to remove hindrances and accumulate a store of meritorious energy so that a disciple will have success in the practice. Several Tibetan traditions practice four *ngondros* for the *Vajrayana* practice: 100,000 prostrations, 100,000 Vajrasattva purifications, 100,000 mandala offerings, 100,000 guru-yoga practices. In the tradition of Tsongkhapa the foremost *ngondro* for the practice of *Vajrayana* is the study and practice of the *Lam Rim*. As special *ngondro* one does the 100,000 guru-yoga practices, i.e. the 100,000 *Migtsemas* within the context of the *Ganden Lha Gyema*.

**Pride** See Divine pride.

**Protectors** There are Dharma protectors (Skt. *dharmapalas* Tib. *chö kyong*) and worldly protectors, also called guardians of the world (Skt. *lokapalas*; Tib. *jikten kyongwa*).

**Puja** A ceremony in which offerings and other acts of devotion are performed in front of holy beings.

**Pure Land** An environment free from true sufferings which appears to a pure mind. A state of existence outside *samsara* in which all conditions are favorable for becoming fully enlightened. Examples include: Tushita or Joyful land, the pure land of Maitreya; Sukhavati, the pure land of Amitabha; Dakiniland, the pure land of Heruka and Vajrayogini.

**Renunciation** (Tib. *ngejung*) The realization of detachment from all of *samsara*, having understood its faults. Also called: determination to be free.

**Root guru** See: spiritual master

**Sadhana** (Skt.) Method of accomplishment. The step by step instructions in Vajrayana for practicing the meditations related to a particular meditational deity. A method for attainment associated with a Tantric Deity

**Sakya** The tradition of Tibetan buddhism founded in the mid-eleventh century under Drog-mi the translator, and later propagated by the line of Sakya Pandita.

**Sakya Pandita** [1182-1251] Fourth of the five patriarchs of the Sakya tradition.

**Samadhi** (Skt. ) A state of deep meditative absorption; single-pointed concentration on the actual nature of things, free from discursive thought and dualistic conceptions.

**Samantabhadra** (Tib. *Küntu zangpo*) A bodhisattva known for his heroic aspiration and extensive offerings.

**Sambhogakaya** (Skt.; Tib. *long ku*) Enjoyment body. One of the form-bodies of a buddha. The body of Buddha as it exists in the Buddha fields or paradises and upper realms; form in which the enlightened mind teaches the highly realized bodhisattvas who are at that stage. This body is fully adorned with the unique physical characteristics of a buddha. It can only be seen by those who have attained the highly realized stage of an arya.

**Samsara** Cyclic existence; the recurring cycle of death and rebirth under the control of ignorance and fraught with suffering.

**Sangha** (Skt.) As object of refuge it is the community of *arya* beings or saints, those who have achieved spiritual aims -have attained a direct realization of emptiness- and are able to help. According to the *vinaya* any community of four or more fully ordained monks is also a sangha. Any being, lay or ordained, who has taken bodhisattva vows is also a sangha. In daily life we regard the community of those on the spiritual path as a sangha.

**Sangwa dupa** See Guhyasamaja

**Seed-syllable** In tantric visualizations, a Sanskrit syllable arising out of emptiness and out of which the meditational deity in turn arises. Also called sacred syllable.

*Segyu* One of the two great transmission lineages in the Gelugpa tradition. This lineage is coming through Segyu Könchok Gyeltsen. The other one is the Ensa nyinggyu lineage.

Self See: I

Self-cherishing The self-centred attitude of considering one's own happiness to be more important than everyone else's. The main obstacle to be overcome in the development of *bodhicitta*.

Self-existence The mistaken conception that things exist independently from their own side rather than being dependent upon causes, conditions, parts and the process of conceptual imputation; the wisdom of emptiness is the understanding that all things lack, or are empty of, even an atom of such self-existence.

Selflessness (Tib. *dak mepa*) Two selflessnesses: personal selflessness and phenomenal selflessness, both being descriptions of the ultimate reality, which is the absence of the two 'selves', the realization of what is called 'transcendental wisdom' or *prajnaparamita*

*Sems dzin*: holding the mind

Sentient Being (skr. *sattva*, Tib. *semchen*) Any being who possesses a mind that is contaminated by delusions or their imprints. Both 'sentient being' and 'living being' are terms used to distinguish beings whose minds are contaminated by any of the two obstructions from Buddhas, whose minds are completely free from these obstructions.

Seven qualities of enlightenment ('seven kisses'). (1) A body of ultimate enjoyment because it is a Buddha's ultimate physical form; 2) a body that is in a state of ultimate union with its own self-manifested consort; 3) a mind that is filled with innate great bliss; 4) a body whose nature lacks self-existence; 5) a mind that is filled with compassion acting spontaneously on behalf of all beings; 6) a body that exists continuously and doesn't exist only intermittently because it neither abides in samsara nor in the peace of Hinayana nirvana; 7) a body that will not cease to exist until samsara is emptied.

Shakyamuni 'Sage of the Sakyas', name of the Buddha of our era, who lived in India 563-483 BC. He was a prince from the Sakya clan. He taught the *sutra* and *tantra* path to liberation; founder of what came to be known as Buddhism. His mundane name was Siddharta Gautama. Buddha Shakyamuni is the fourth of one thousand Buddhas that are to appear in this world age. Also see: Buddha.

*Shamatha* (Skt.; Tib. *zhiné*) Mental quiescence or meditative equipoise. The tranquil, single-pointed settling of the mind on an object of meditation for a sustained period of time. A degree of concentration characterized by mental and physical ecstasy. The nine stages leading to shamatha are degrees of concentration

Shantideva (687-763) A great Indian Buddhist teacher, meditator and scholar, most famous for his masterpiece, *Bodhisattvacaryavatara, Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*.

Shastras A type of religious, philosophical or scientific work whose importance lies not in its scriptural authority but in its systematic study of particular problems or techniques.

*Shunyata* See: Emptiness

*Siddha* Accomplished practitioner.

*Siddhi* Achievement, attainment. These are of two types: common attainments and supreme attainments.

Six ornaments and two excellences These are important figures in the transmission of Buddha's teachings. The six ornaments of Buddhism or the six jewels of India are the great pandits: Nagarjuna, Asanga, Aryadeva, Vasubandhu, Dignaga and Dharmakirti. The two excellences or the two supreme ones are the *vinaya* masters Gunaprabha and Shakyaprabha.

Six Paramitas (Skt., Tib. *paroltuchinpa*) The six perfections or transcending practices of the bodhisattva's way of life: generosity or giving (Skt. *dana*), morality or ethical discipline (Skt. *sila*), tolerance or patience or forbearance (Skt. *ksanti*), diligence, joyous perseverance or enthusiasm (Skt. *virya*), meditation or concentration (Skt. *dhyana*) and wisdom (Skt. *prajna*), based upon the altruistic aspiration to attain buddhahood as a tool to benefit the world. The ten transcendences are the six ones to ripen one's own mind and in addition to help ripen others' mind: skill in liberative technique or method (*upayakausalya*) prayer or commitment (*pranidhana*), power (*bala*) and sublime wisdom or gnosis (*jnana*)

Six Realms See: Realms

Six root delusions (*kleshas*) Attachment, anger, pride, ignorance, doubt, wrong view. There are other divisions. There are other divisions of three, five, twenty.

Skandhas (Skt., Tib. *phungbo*) See: Five skandhas.

Solitary Realizer (Skt. *Pratyekabuddha*) The higher of the two types of arhats of the *Hinayana*. The Hinayana practitioner who attains *nirvana* by following his personal path and living in solitude, but who lacks the complete realisation of a Buddha so cannot benefit limitless beings as a Buddha can. He is contrasted to the *sravaka* arhat who attains nirvana largely by listening to teachings and living in groups.

Sometimes in a gross division of nine levels the desire-realm is called the first level, then four form-levels and four formless-levels.

Special insight (Skt. *vipasyana*, Tib. *lhagtong*)

Spiritual master (skr. *guru*, Tib. *lama*) A spiritual guide or teacher. One who shows a disciple the path to liberation and enlightenment. A direct guru is any spiritual guide from whom we have received teachings in this life, a lineage guru is any spiritual guide who has passed on the lineage of teaching received by our own direct gurus.

One's principal spiritual guide is also known as one's root guru (Tib. *tsewei lama*). In tantra, one's teacher is seen as inseparable from the meditational deity and the essential nature of one's mind.

**Sutra** (Skt.; Tib. *do*) The teachings of Buddha that are open to everyone to practice. This pre-tantric division of buddhist teachings stresses the cultivation of bodhicitta and the practices of the six perfections.

**Sutrayana** The pre-tantric vehicle or path of Buddhism, leading to the attainment of full enlightenment over three countless eons through the practice of the six perfections; hence also called the perfection vehicle (*paramitayana*)

**Tantra** (skr., Tib. *gyu*) Literally 'thread' or 'steam' or 'continuity', the 'stream' or 'tread' of innate wisdom embracing all experience. Another name is: secret mantra. The texts of the secret-mantra teachings of buddhism. The esoteric teaching of Buddha. The essential practice of tantra that distinguishes it from sutra is bringing the result into the path. The practice involves identification of oneself with a fully enlightened deity. The tantric stages of the path are called *nag rim*. Also see Four classes of tantra.

**Tantrayana** The post-sutra vehicle of Buddhism, capable of leading to the attainment of full enlightenment within one lifetime. Also called 'the diamond vehicle', i.e. *ajrayana*, or *mantrayana*.

**Tara** (Tib. *Dolma*) Female meditational deity. 'She who can free us'. Compassionate saviour goddess. She was born from a tear of Avalokiteshvara and vowed to help him to liberate all beings from samsara. Referred to as the mother of the buddhas of the past, present and future. She is Atisha's patroness and became subsequently a favourite goddess in Tibet because of Atisha's introducing her devotion. There are twenty-one Tara forms.

**Tathagata** An epithet of Buddha 'One who has thus gone'.

**Ten directions** The four cardinal directions, the four intermediate directions, and the directions above and below. As a conventional formula it means 'all directions'.

**Thangka** A traditional painting of a Buddha.

**Theravada** 'Vehicle of the Elders'. Tradition of buddhism following its earlier style of practice and understanding of scripture. Sometimes called *Hinayana*. Its final goal is *arhatship*.

**Three Bodies of a Buddha** (*trikaya*) See: Kaya

**Three Higher Trainings** Ethical discipline or morality, concentration, and wisdom. These are the principles themes of the *Tripitaka*, the three baskets of scriptures, and they are the very substance of the Hinayana path.

**Tigle** See drops.

**Torma offering** A special food offering made according to either sutric or tantric rituals.

**Transmission, oral** The passing of a pure, unbroken oral lineage. All the root texts and their commentaries have been passed in a pure, unbroken lineage from teachers to disciples from the time of Buddha down to the present day. It is customary at the end of a teaching for the teacher to recite all the words of the text, just as he heard them from his own teacher. A disciple is not considered to have received a teaching until he or she has heard all the words from the mouth of a qualified spiritual guide. A teaching that has been received in this way is completely pure and it carries the blessings of all the lineage gurus who transmitted the same teaching in the past.

**Trijang Rinpoche** Yongdzin Trijang Dorje Chang [1901-1981], Lozang Yeshe. Was the junior tutor to His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and holder of the many lineages in sutra and secret mantra. Disciple of Pabongka Rinpoche. The senior tutor to the Dalai Lama was Yongdzin Ling Dorje-Chang (1903-c.1984), Thubten Lungtog, ninety-seventh holder of the throne of Ganden. Both Trijang Rinpoche and Ling Rinpoche were teachers of Gelek Rinpoche.

**Tripitaka** (Skt; Tib. *sde sgnod gsum*). Lit. the three baskets. It are the collections of the Buddha's teachings, the three scriptural collections corresponding to the three higher trainings: *vinaya*, the collection of teachings on the discipline of morality; *sutra*, the collection of scriptures on transcendental method and transcendental wisdom both, corresponding to the higher training of meditation, and *abidharma*, the collection of teachings on metaphysics, corresponding to the training of wisdom.

**Truth Body** (Skt. *dharmakaya*) See: Kaya

**Tsongkhapa** (1357-1419) Lit. 'The man from the union land (Tsong)'. Je Tsongkhapa was a great fourteenth-century scholar and teacher who reforming the Kadampa tradition restored the purity of buddhadharma in Tibet, thus founding the Gelug tradition. His many treatises finalized the work begun by Atisha of clarification and synthesis of the vast body of Indian scriptures and schools of practice into a unified exposition of sutrayana and tantrayana paths. He wrote several lamrims, the most well-known one is Great exposition on the Stages of the Path, *Lam rim chen mo*. On the stages in tantra he wrote the Great exposition of secret mantra, *sNgags rim chen mo*. He is regarded a full enlightened being and along with Longchen Rabjampa (1308-1363) and the Sakya Pandita (1182-1251 an emanation of Manjushri. That is why he is called *Jamgon*, 'gentle lord', indicating that he and the deity Manjughosha-form of Manjushri- are of one essence. He is regarded as the synthesis of Manjushri, Avalokiteshvara and Vajrapani and therefore regarded as the embodiment of the wisdom, compassion and power of all the buddhas.

**Tummo** (Tib. *tummo*) Inner fire or psychic heat. An inner heat located at the center of the navel channel wheel.

**Tushita** (Tib. *Ganden*) The Heaven of Joy. The pure land of Tushita is resided over by Maitreya, the future buddha. It is the place where bodhisattvas wait to become a buddha. Famous teachers such as Tsongkhapa and Atisha are residing there. Tushita pure land is situated in a 'corner' of the six abodes of the desire-realm gods. See: Realms.

Twelve principles events of Buddha's life 1. Taking birth in a joyful realm prior to descending to a rose-apple island. 2. Descending from a joyful realm after having transferred his throne to the next complete spiritual leader for the eon. 3. Entering his mother's womb and taking birth. 4. Becoming skilled and learned in the arts. 5. Delighting in the company of his wife. 6. Taking the robes of a spiritual seeker who has renounced family life with the determination to be free from all problems. 7. Undergoing difficult ascetic practices. 8. Proceeding to a tree of purified growth. 9. Overcoming all demonic forces. 10. Manifesting the highest state of purified growth. 11. Setting flow rounds of transmission of preventive measures 12. Demonstrating a final release from all troubles by passing away.

Twenty two bodhiminds According to the Perfection of Wisdom sutras (*Prajnaparamita sutra*) they are: like earth, like bright gold, like a new moon, like blazing fire, like a great treasure, like a jewel mine, like a great ocean, like a vajra, like a mountain, like medicine, like a virtuous spiritual friend, like a wish-granting jewel, like the sun, like a pleasant song of dharma, like a king, like a treasury, like a highway, like a chariot, like spring water, like a pleasant sound, like a river, like a cloud.

Two Accumulations Also called the two collections. The accumulation or store of merit and of wisdom; all deeds of bodhisattvas contribute to their accumulation of these two stores, which ultimately culminate in the two bodies of a buddha, the body of form or *rupakaya* and the ultimate body or *dharmakaya*

Two selflessnesses Personal selflessness and phenomenal selflessness, both being descriptions of the ultimate reality, which is the absence of the two 'selves', the realization of what is called 'transcendental wisdom' or *prajnaparamita*

Two stages of Vajrayana In the three lower classes of tantra this term refers to the 'yoga with images' and the 'yoga without images'. In highest tantra it refers to the generation and completion phases. The former is largely concerned with the generation of the vision of the world as mandala, sound as mantra and thoughts as innate wisdom of bliss and voidness. The latter stage mostly deals with completion of this process by the practice of channeling all the vital energies to the heart, producing the illusory body, realizing the two types of clear light, and attaining the state of great union.

Two truths All objects of cognition have two modes of existence, called 'truths'. The truth of appearance or relative truth or conventional truth (skr. *samvrtisattya*) is the aspect of existence according to worldly convention and expression. And the absolute truth or ultimate truth (skr. *paramarthasattya*) is the voidness of all phenomena, the mere absence of inherent existence, the reality of existence. So, the absolute or ultimate truth is emptiness; all other levels belong to the relative or conventional truth

Uddiyana (Tib. *Ogyen*) The Land of the Dakinis; the home of Vajrayana, where almost all revealed Vajrayana teachings are from. It is said to be the land where Padmasambhava comes from.

Union, state of ultimate (Skt. *yuganaddha*. Tib. *zungjuk*). Tantric term for buddhahood.

Vairochana (Tib. *Nampar namdze*) The manifestation of the form aggregate of all Buddhas. He is one of the five Tathagatas or Dhyanis buddhas. He has a white-colored body. He holds the commitments of refuge to Buddha, to Dharma, to Sangha, refrain from non-virtue, practice virtue, help others.

Vajra (Skt.; Tib. *dorje*) Diamond scepter. Generally the Sanskrit word 'vajra' means indestructible like a diamond and powerful like a thunderbolt. In the context of tantra it means the indivisibility of method and wisdom.

Vajra body (Tib. *dorje ku*). The system of channels, energy-winds or airs, and drops existing within a human being's ordinary physical body and activated through the practice of highest yoga tantra, thereby leading to the arousal of an extremely subtle and blissful state of mind (cf. clear light) capable of generating a penetrative wisdom that can eradicate delusions from the mind.

Vajradhara (Skt; Tib. *Dorje Chang*) 'Holder of the diamond scepter'. Conqueror Vajradhara is the source of all secret mantra. He is the same nature as buddha Shakyamuni but displays a different aspect. Buddha Shakyamuni appears in the aspect of an emanation body, *nirmanakaya*, and Conqueror Vajradhara appears in the aspect of an enjoyment body, *sambhogakaya*. He symbolizes the attainment of enlightenment through the union of simultaneous great bliss and emptiness.

Vajra-master Teacher who is qualified to perform the task of a tantric guru.

Vajrapani (Tib. *Sangwedag*) An important bodhisattva whose compassion is to manifest in a terrific form to protect the practitioners of the dharma from harmful influences.

Vajrasattva (Tib. *Dorje Sempa*) Diamond Being. Male meditational deity; a major tantric purification practice for removing obstacles created by negative *karma* and the breaking of one's vows.

Vajrayana (Skt.) Secret mantra vehicle. The advanced means to quickly achieve buddhahood -within one lifetime- for the sake of all sentient beings. Its method is bringing the result into the path. It is also called: *tantrayana*. It is part of the Mahayana, which is divided into *sutrayana* and *tantrayana*

Vajrayogini (Tib. *Dorje Neljorma*) Female meditational deity of the *maha-annutara yoga tantra*, who is the embodiment of indivisible bliss and emptiness. She is the same nature as Heruka Chakrasamvara. It is a mother tantra.

Vasubandhu (4th or 5th century) Younger brother of Asanga. He wrote the *Treasury of abhidharma* (skr. *Abhidharmakosha*) and commentaries on work of Maitreya and Asanga. Abbot of Nalanda university. *Vasubhandu* A great Buddhist scholar who was converted to the Mahayana by his brother, Asanga.

**Vikramashila** One of the famous buddhist universities in India. Atisha headed this monastery before going to Tibet.

**Vinaya** (Skt.) The first of the three major collections of scriptures or ‘baskets’ of the buddhist canon, the *Tripitaka*. It contains the narratives of how the Buddha established the monastic life and rules. It also refers to the code of behavior contained in this vinaya basket, followed by those who have taken the vows of the buddhist order. *Vinaya Sutras* are sutras in which Buddha principally explained the practice of moral discipline, and in particular the Pratimoksha moral discipline.

**Vipasyana** (Skt) See: Lhagtong.

**Visualization** The use of creative imagination in meditation. Despite the term used it is not limited to vision, but involves the full creative sphere of one’s imaging abilities

**Void or Voidness** See: Emptiness

**Vows** Promises to refrain from certain actions. The three sets of vows are the Pratimoksha vows of individual liberation, the Bodhisattva vows, and the Secret Mantra vows.

**Wind** (*prana*) Also called air or energy. In *Vajrayana* the energy serves as the mount for the various gross and subtle states of consciousness.

**Wisdom being** (skr. *jnana-sattva*; Tib. *yeshe sempa*) An actual Buddha, especially one who is invited to unite with a visualized commitment being.

**Wisdom** (skr. *prajna*, Tib. *sherab*) The sixth of the six transcendences or *paramitas*. The unmistakable understanding of things; specifically the insight into emptiness: the actual way in which things exist; Wisdom is the antidote to ignorance. It is symbolized by Manjushri

**Yab yum** yab is father (male buddha); yum is mother (female buddha)

**Yamantaka** A yidam; in *maha-annutara-yoga tantra* a wrathful manifestation of Manjushri, to overcome hindrances; it is a father-tantra. Many names refer to him: First of all ‘Terminator of Death’ in sanskrit Yamantaka (Yama-antaka) in Tibetan *Shinje She*; Then ‘Vajra Terrifier’, in sanskrit Vajra Bhairava, in Tibetan *Dorje Jigje*. He is also referred to as ‘King of the Yamas’, in sanskrit Yama Raja, in Tibetan *Shinje Gyalpo*. There are many forms of Yamantaka. The Yamantaka referred to in this teaching is the ‘Solitary Hero Yamantaka’, in sanskrit Yamantaka Ekavira, in Tibetan referred to as *Dorje Jigje Pawo chikpa*

**Yama** (Tib. *Shinje*) The Lord of Death. Personification of uncontrolled death. Although he is not actually a sentient being he is depicted as a being and known as a lord because death has dominion over our lives. In the diagram of the wheel of life he is depicted clutching the six realms of cyclic existence.

**Yana** Vehicle; the means whereby a practitioner is led to his or her desired spiritual attainment (*sutrayana*, *tantrayana*).

**Yidam** (Tib sometimes *lha*) Also called meditational deity. A male or female figure embodying a particular aspect of the fully enlightened experience and used as the focus of concentration and identification in tantra.

**Yoga** (Skt.; Tib. *neljor*) A term used for various spiritual practices that entail maintaining a special view, such as Guru yoga and the yogas of eating, sleeping, dreaming, and waking. ‘Yoga’ also refers to union, such as the union of tranquil abiding and superior seeing.

**Yogi, Yogini** (Skt.; Tib. *neljorpa*) Male resp. female practitioner.

**Zhine** (Tib.) See Shamatha.

**Zungjuk** [Skt yuganaddha] union, ultimate goal of integration

# XI

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## GEHLEK RIMPOCHE

Gelek Rinpoche is een vooraanstaand Gelugpa meester uit de Tibetaanse traditie van het Mahayana Boeddhisme. Hij is de spiritueel leider van diverse Jewel-Heart groepen in de Verenigde Staten, Maleisië, Singapore en Nederland.

Ngawang Gelek Demo Rinpoche werd in 1939 in Tibet geboren als zoon van Demo Rinpoche. Hij behoort tot de familie van de Dertiende Dalai Lama. Na op vierjarige leeftijd herkend te zijn als reïncarnatie van de abt van het tantrische klooster van Gyüto werd hij opgevoed in het Gelugpa universiteitsklooster van Drepung. In de helft van de tijd voltooide hij de 25-jaar durende studie tot geshe lharampa (vgl. doctor in filosofie/theologie).


In 1959 moest hij zijn land verlaten vanwege de Chinese overheersing. Hij woonde daarna in India, studeerde onder de leraren Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche en Kyabje Ling Rinpoche, beide leraren van de Dalai Lama, en werkte aan het aan het opnieuw toegankelijk maken en heruitgeven van een groot aantal klassieke teksten van Tibetaanse en Mongoolse Gelugpa geleerden.

Aan het einde der zeventiger jaren verzochten zijn leraren hem het leraarschap op zich te nemen. Naar Nederland kwam hij voor het eerst in 1985, op uitnodiging van zijn studente Hélène van Hoorn. Na dit bezoek vormde zich rondom hem een studiegroep, nu actief onder de naam Jewel Heart.

Momenteel woont Rinpoche in de Verenigde Staten. Hij geeft regelmatig les in boeddhistische centra en universiteiten o.a. in de VS, Maleisië, Nederland en andere Europese landen.

Najaar 2001 verscheen bij Riverhead Books, New York van zijn hand: *Good Life, Good Death; Tibetan Wisdom on reincarnation*, in het Nederlands uitgegeven door Altamira Becht, maart 2003, onder de titel *Voor de dood niet bang; Tibetaanse denkbeelden over reïncarnatie*.

## JEWEL HEART

 *Jewel Heart staat in de rijke traditie van het Tibetaans Boeddhisme. Ze beoogt het behoud en het doorgeven van het Mahayana Boeddhisme op een wijze die aansluit bij de westerse cultuur. Het programma omvat methoden om liefde en mededogen te vertalen in effectief handelen. Jewel Heart's spirituele leider Gehlek Rimpoche heeft de taak op zich genomen dit spirituele doel dichterbij te brengen door middel van onderricht en in praktijk brengen van de Gelug-traditie van Je Tsong Khapa (1357-1419) en Z.H. de Dalai Lama.*

De naam Jewel Heart is gekozen omdat het hart staat voor liefdevolle warmte zonder welke een mens niet kan bestaan en juweel verwijst naar het zuivere innerlijke wezen van elk mens. Door te accepteren dat ons leven uitermate waardevol en kostbaar is en door ontplooiing van onze kwaliteiten, zal innerlijke vrede toenemen en zal ons handelen in het teken komen staan van liefdevolle zorg voor anderen. Hieraan is het werk van het instituut gewijd.

\*\*\*

JEWEL HEART verzorgt in NIJMEGEN en deels ook in 's HERTOGENBOSCH, TILBURG en UTRECHT en ARNHEM studie- en meditatiegroepen op basis van de drie stromen van het door Gehlek Rimpoche opgestelde JEWEL-HEART SCHOLINGSPROGRAMMA:

- STROOM I: KENNISMAKING
- *Inleidende scholing in meditatie.*
  - *Inscholing in boeddhistische levensfilosofie.*
- STROOM II: INTEGRATIE
- *Odyssee naar Vrijheid*
  - *Lamrim studie en meditatie.*
- STROOM III: VERDIEPING
- *Mahayana Verdieping*
  - *Vajrayana studie en beoefening*

OVERIGE AKTIVITEITEN: wekelijkse open meditatie-avond, thanka tekenen, meditatie en lichaamswerk, Tara healing en selfhealing.

Tijdens het periodiek bezoek van Gehlek Rimpoche verzorgt Jewel Heart lezingen, weekends en meerdaagse retraites van Rinpoche. Enkele keren per jaar geven andere Tibetaanse leraren (m.n. Tarab Tulku) en westerse meditatie-leraren les.

Voor regelmatige informatie verschijnt vier maal per jaar de Jewel Heart Nieuwsbrief.  
Opgave abonnement via het secretariaat.

\*\*\*

Jewel Heart heeft ook groepen in de Verenigde Staten (Ann Arbor/Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland, Lincoln, New York, San Francisco), Maleisië (Muar) en Singapore (Singapore).

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\* Vajrayana transcripten. Voor het lezen en kunnen begrijpen hiervan is het noodzakelijk dat men een initiatie in de hoogste yoga tantra heeft ontvangen van een gekwalificeerd leraar.

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